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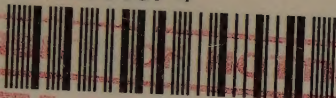


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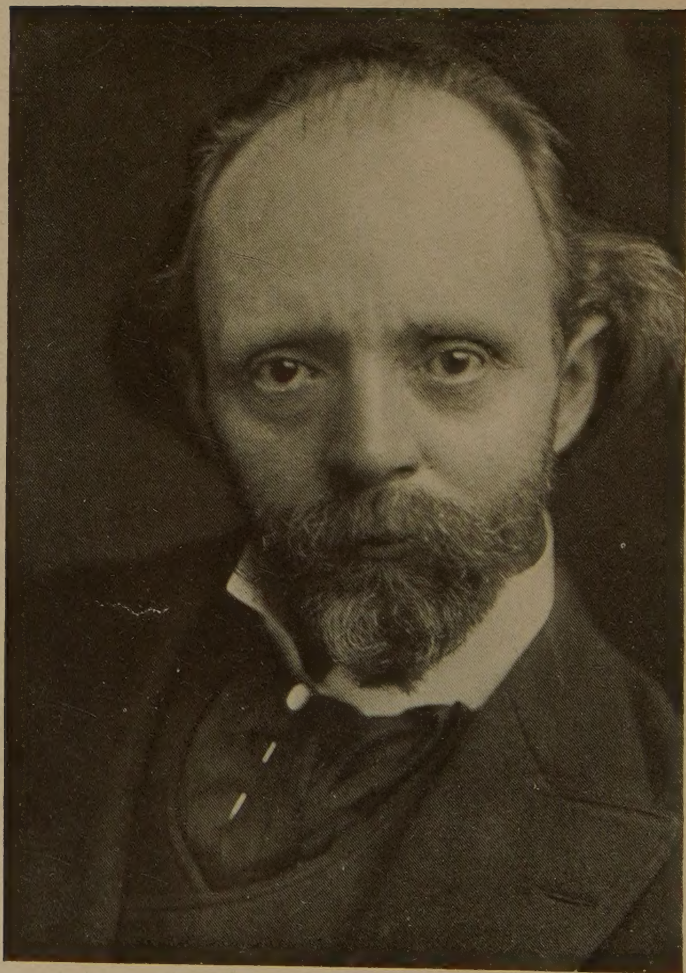
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THE BONDMAN PLAY

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MR. HALL CAINE.

Frontispiece

THE BONDMAN PLAY

BY HALL CAINE

LONDON
THE DAILY MAIL
1906

The Photographs of Mr. Hall Caine and Mrs. Patrick Campbell are by Beresford.

The photograph of Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Greeba is by W. and D. Downey, Ebury Street, and that of Mr. Arthur Collins by Langfier, Ltd.

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THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

ADAM FAIRBROTHER

RUTH FAIRBROTHER

GREERA

MONA

DABBY

GRANDFATHER

MICHAEL } *Half-brothers*
JASON }

FATHER FEBRATI

GOVERNOR TESTA

DOCTOR BONI

MARSHAL OF POLICE

*Farm Servants and Coastguards in Man; Naval Officers,
Police, Soldiers, Warders, Students, Housekeeper
and Maids in Sicily.*

*Produced by Arthur Collins at
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,
London, on September 20, 1906.*

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

THE FIRST ACT

"MANSION HOUSE" OF FARM IN MAN

THE SECOND ACT

"STREET" OF FARM IN MAN

THE THIRD ACT

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE—SICILY

THE FOURTH ACT

SULPHUR MINES—SICILY

THE FIFTH ACT

PRESBYTERY—"LONELY ISLAND," SICILY

THREE YEARS are supposed to elapse between Acts One and Two; *A MONTH* between Acts Two and Three; *A MONTH* between Acts Three and Four; *SIX MONTHS* between Acts Four and Five.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE BONDMAN is written in five acts, but for the greater convenience of the stage at Drury Lane Theatre, it is to be played in four, the third and fourth acts being given as one. The scene of the first and second acts is laid in the Isle of Man, while that of the third and fourth is in Sicily, and the period is the middle of the nineteenth century, when the maritime relations of the two islands were closer than they are now. Lest the few (and not important) political incidents which stand as a background to the story of human passion, should seem to clash with history, the author apologises for any liberties he may have taken with fact in dealing with events that are supposed to occur in the last evil days of the Kingdom of Naples.

Having said so much, it can hardly be necessary to tell those who know the author's novel of the same name, that the drama (while preserving the original motive and the principal characters) is not so much a dramatisation of the story as an independent play on the same subject.

THE STORY OF "THE BONDMAN"

The two principal male characters in the drama are half-brothers, their father, a Sicilian, having first betrayed and deserted the daughter of the Governor

of one of the dependencies of Sicily (who has cast her out of doors at the birth of her illegitimate child), and then come to the Isle of Man, where he married another woman, who bore him another son. The Sicilian son, Jason, has reached manhood, when his mother dies, and, at the point of death, she prompts him to avenge her wrongs on his father and his father's son in the foreign country. About the same time the father himself dies, and in the hour of death he urges his English son, Michael, to find and succour the woman he has injured and the child he has left fatherless. This occurs before the curtain rises, and the play is intended to illustrate the conflict of the Pagan ideal of vengeance with the Christian ideal of love.

Michael sets out for Sicily on his mission of mercy at the moment when Jason arrives in Man on his errand of vengeance. They miss each other by less than an hour, and Jason finds himself in the house and among the family that Michael has left behind him.

THE SECOND ACT

The Second Act is concerned with the life of Jason in Man. Here he falls in love with the girl, Greeba, to whom Michael is devotedly attached. His love humanises and ennobles him, and he puts aside for a time his evil purpose. Greeba, on her part, more than half-drawn to the stranger, struggles to be faithful to Michael, but after three years have passed, in which he does not return, and nothing is heard of him, she yields (under the importunities of family and friends, and the innuendoes of enemies) to the

pleading of Jason, and consents to marry him. Hardly has she done so when news comes from Michael, explaining his absence and silence on the ground of his imprisonment for participating in a revolutionary movement, and this brings back Greeba's affections to their original object, with the result that she begs Jason to relieve her of her promise. Jason does so, but the enmity against his father's son, which he had inherited from his mother, has now become personal to himself, and in a fit of mad jealousy he swears afresh his vengeance upon the half-brother who first robbed him of a father and now robs him of a wife.

THIRD ACT

The Third Act (first scene of Third at Drury Lane) is concerned with the life of Michael in Sicily and the effort of Jason to meet him there. Having failed in his errand of mercy (the Sicilian mother being dead and her son gone from the country), Michael (like another English-born enemy of the Bourbons) has enlisted himself in one of the many revolutionary struggles of his father's country, about the year 1860, with the result that he has overthrown the Governor Testa (who was the grandfather of Jason) and established himself in his office and house. To this house Jason comes on his errand of vengeance, being introduced into it by one of the old Governor's confederates, who is using his madness as a means of reprisal. But when the moment arrives in which Jason expects to encounter Michael, it is Greeba (now Michael's wife) with whom he comes face to face. Greeba sees through Jason's purpose, pleads with him

to put it away, struggles hard to soothe and conciliate him, and when all efforts seem hopeless, and there is nothing left but to protect the life of the man she wholly loves at any cost to the man she partly loves, she denounces Jason as a political spy and sends him to prison. Then comes Michael, who has discovered Jason's identity, but knows nothing yet of his life in Man. Bent on cancelling Jason's punishment, he is only restrained by Greeba's entreaties, which, first awakening misgiving and then suspicion, finally result in a full revelation of Greeba's relations to him in her own country. Michael thinks he has been deceived, charges Greeba with failure of faith in him, accuses her of protecting a secret of her own rather than his life in denouncing Jason as a spy, and then renouncing the mission of mercy with which his father has inspired him, he in his turn vows a life-long enmity against the man who has come between him and the woman he loves. At this moment the schemes of the Governor's confederate come to a head, and Michael is arrested by his enemies as a traitor against the King (by assisting in the general effort of the time to overthrow his Government), and he, also, is cast into prison.

FOURTH ACT

The Fourth Act (Second Scene of Third at Drury Lane) shows how and where the half-brothers, who now hate each other with a hatred partly inherited but mainly personal, at length come together. It is in a place where all personal identity is lost and neither knows the other from another man. At the Sulphur Mines on a convict island, Michael and Jason first

meet as B25 and D25, and straightway the sworn enemies become sworn friends. Lashed together by an order of intolerable tyranny, the two men are comrades more attached than brothers, helping each other in their work, bearing each other's burdens, protecting each other from cruelty, comforting and cheering and sympathising with each other, so that when at length, by the last spasm of the Governor's tyranny, each comes to know who the other is, the call of love proves stronger than the cry of hate, and Jason remains with Michael to save him from death, and to carry him in his arms to a place of safety after an outbreak of a volcanic mountain, and everybody else has fled.

LAST ACT

The last Act shows how Greeba is brought back to the circle of affection which now unites the half-brothers whose love for her had divided them. Michael, who has been temporarily blinded by a shaft from a solfatara and re-captured after Jason had rescued him, is exiled to a lonely island called (for obvious reasons) "St. Helda." There he is in the charge of the priest to the little community, a person whom he had befriended in the period of his power. Greeba is there also in the disguise of the priest's housekeeper (a noiseless spirit about the house, never speaking in the presence of the blind prisoner) having come to watch over and comfort her husband, though he knows nothing of her identity, and to wait for the time when his love shall return to her and she may reveal herself to him. A war-ship lies at anchor outside to see that Michael does not escape, and just

when rumour reaches the island that efforts are being made on the mainland to overthrow the old Governor again (as well as his master the King of Naples) and secure the return of the young President, an English mail-steamer brings out a new crew for the man-of-war, with certain fresh orders that concern the prisoner. It also brings out a broken wreck of a man who has smuggled his way up to the priest's house unobserved. This is Jason, who still loves Greeba, but has abandoned hope of her, and, having been the means of dividing husband and wife, is there to unite them and help them to escape. He sees Greeba first and tells her that he has taken two berths on the English steamer for the homeward voyage, and contrived a means by which she and Michael shall use them. Next he sees the priest and makes pretence of an effort to enable Michael to regain his sight, by begging that the blind man shall be allowed to steal away for a short period to be operated upon by a great doctor in Palermo. Finally he sees Michael and pretends to bring a message from Greeba herself, who is said to be dying at home in Man, and calling him to come to her, if only for one day, to give her his forgiveness. One by one, with artifice and subterfuge, by pleas and threats and generous lies, Jason has his way, and joining the hands of Greeba and Michael, though his own heart is breaking, he sends them off to happiness and safety, while he remains behind as bondman to the old priest in the prisoner's place.

Husband and wife having gone, Jason writes them a letter saying he has escaped (therefore they have no reason to come back), and then calls the priest

and reveals the truth. The order the new crew are bringing out is an order for Michael's execution, and Jason is there to die instead of him. The priest protests and Jason explains. He loves his brother's wife—what life is there for him without her? Since his escape from the Sulphur Mines he has been drinking himself to death—isn't it better to die in bringing two sundered hearts together than to be found dead in a ditch some day? The officers of the new crew come with the warrant, present it to Jason (not knowing him from Michael) and Jason only begs to be permitted to wave his adieux from the cliff to his friends of the old crew who are going off in the departing steamer. As he goes out for this purpose he is recognised by the Governor who has followed his order to see it executed (being suspicious of all his servants), and is now made to realise that his victim has escaped, and that while he has come there to gratify his lust of hatred against his enemy, his own child's child, his outcast daughter's outcast son, has come before him to lay down his life for his friend. In shame and fear the old man tears up the warrant for Michael's execution and orders the officers back to the war-ship, leaving Jason on the island as a free prisoner in his brother's place.

FINAL TABLEAU

The drama, which opens at Drury Lane Theatre with a tableau showing Jason as a sailor escaping from his ship in Man to carry out his errand of vengeance upon Michael, closes with a tableau in Sicily showing Jason on a rocky headland, in the

character of his brother's bondman, waving farewell to the departing steamer that is taking Michael and Greeba to home and happiness. When the steamer has disappeared there is nothing left but the lonely figure on the topmost point of the lonely coast, with seagulls screaming above him and the waves beating on the rocks below. But the Christian ideal has triumphed, and the man who came to slay has stayed to save.

THE BONDMAN

THE FIRST ACT

AN OPENING PICTURE *represents a market-place in the Isle of Man. It is evening, and the scene is strongly illuminated by the setting sun. There is a glimpse of the harbour with the ruins of a picturesque castle on right, and a view of the sea on left, with a fleet of fishing-boats sailing out. The market-place is filled with hawkers' barrows and stalls, but the market is over for the day and the hawkers are packing up and going off. A steamer sails into the bay and turns as if coming to anchor.*

Suddenly a gun is fired from the steamer. The people in the market-place stop in their work and look off. Presently a MAN, a Seaman, appears on the seaward side of the scene and pushes his way through the crowd, as if conscious that he is pursued. He is a wild, distraught creature, bare-footed, and apparently wet as if he has been swimming ashore. For one moment he is plainly seen, and then he disappears.

Immediately behind come FOUR COASTGUARDSMEN, armed, and in pursuit. The PEOPLE in the

market-place, who have been watching and talking eagerly, point out the direction in which the fugitive has escaped, and the COASTGUARD follow in hot haste. There are confused murmurs and cries, the barrows are hurriedly wheeled off, the market-place empties, the sun sets over the line of the sea, darkness begins to fall, and the scene changes.

THE ACTING SCENE represents the hall of a farm house; a comfortable, almost luxurious, chamber, half-timbered. White walls, dresser, press, cabinet, clock, corner-cupboard, chest, all of black oak. There is a staircase on right leading up to a landing, from which doors open into bedrooms. A door down stage at foot of staircase on right; a larger door on right under landing, standing open and showing a distant view of the scene in the picture. At back a broad window, with window-board; on left a wide ingle with a door at back of it. A log and turf fire is burning on the hearth. Big arm-chairs and big dining-table. A cottage piano or harpsichord. A telescope in the window recess.

When the scene opens an Old Man (the GRANDFATHER), in the costume of a sea captain, is looking through the telescope; two children (DANNY and MONA) are playing on the window-board, and the servant (CHRISTIAN ANN) is packing traveller's trunk near the middle of the floor.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

[Counting shirts out of basket into a trunk.] Eight, nine, ten—enough for the voyage, at all events.

GRANDFATHER.

[*Looking through telescope.*] Here she is at last!

MONA.

[*Leaping down.*] The ship?

GRANDFATHER.

The steamer cousin Michael is to sail in.

DANNY.

Let me look at her, Grandpa!

GRANDFATHER.

Fetch up the stool, then, while I fix you the focus. There she is, swinging to an anchor in the bay.

MONA.

Will she stay long, Grandpa?

GRANDFATHER.

Two hours at most—just long enough for three bells, and the passengers to get aboard.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

[*Counting collars.*] Yes, Miss Greeba has seen to his shirts and collars, but who is to do for the man in foreign parts, I wonder!

[*There is a loud boom of a gun; EVERYBODY startled.*]

DANNY.

[*At the telescope.*] The ship's busted. I can't see nothing but smoke, Grandpa.

[GRANDFATHER.

Let me look at her again, laddie.

[*The doors of bedrooms open, and MICHAEL SUNLOCKS, ADAM FAIRBROTHER, and MRS. FAIRBROTHER, in various stages of undress, appear on the landing.*

MICHAEL.

What's that?

ADAM.

What's amiss?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Sakes alive! Can't somebody speak? What's the matter?

GRANDFATHER.

[*At telescope.*] It's the steamer—the steamer from Sicily. She came to an anchor a few minutes ago, and now she's signalling to the shore.

MICHAEL.

Something must have happened.

GRANDFATHER.

Something *has* happened, sir; she's talking to the Coastguard.

ADAM.

What's she saying? You're an old sailor—what's she saying, grandfather?

GRANDFATHER.

She's saying—What's this? [*Spelling.*] D—E—
S—E—R—T—E—R!

MICHAEL.

Deserter!

GRANDFATHER.

Wait! She says. [*Spelling.*] C — A — P —
T — U — R — E . . . Yes, she says, one of her crew
has jumped overboard, and she's telling the coast-
guard to capture him.

[*Enter JOHN ROBERT, a farm hand—very small.*

JOHN ROBERT.

I saw it myself, Cap'n! I was putting the mare
into the stiff cart when I saw the man dive. He
went over the stern as the steamer was fetching
round, and swam away like a porpoise.

[*Enter JOHN JAMES, another farm hand—very
big.*

JOHN JAMES.

The man has landed on Contrary now, and he's
climbing the cliffs like a steeple-jack.

MICHAEL.

Some poor fellow who is tired of the tyranny of
the foc's'le, perhaps. [*Goes back.*

ADAM.

Or some poor soul who is tired of his life, maybe.
[*Goes back.*

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Some dirty, idle raggabash who wants to shirk his work, more likely. We've enough of the sort in these parts already, and I hope he'll be caught quick and carried back. [Goes in.]

DANNY.

Let's look at him, Grandpa.

GRANDFATHER.

Ease up, little ones.

[GRANDFATHER and CHILDREN go out. FARM HANDS come down to assist CHRISTIAN ANN.]

JOHN JAMES.

So he's going away alone, after all, Christian Ann.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Is he? Then sit yourself on this trunk while I turn the key in the lock, my man.

JOHN ROBERT.

We thought there might be a wedding before he went, and Mistress Greeba might be going along with him.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Did you? Then reach me that rope and make yourself useful.

JOHN ROBERT.

But now the man is going off to the ends of the earth, and goodness knows if he will ever come back to her.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Wrong again, John Robert! Michael Sunlocks will be home in two years' time, so just lash that rope around this box, unless you want it to hang yourself.

JOHN JAMES.

Two years is long, though—long enough for the man to get another woman in the country he's going to.

JOHN ROBERT.

And long enough for the woman to get another man where he's leaving her behind him.

JOHN JAMES.

Out of sight, out of mind; that's the way with the women.

JOHN ROBERT.

Love them or leave them, but don't trust them no further than you can touch them—that's my motto.

[MRS. FAIRBROTHER *comes down stairs*.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Where there's geese there's dirt, and where there's servants there's talking. Away with these things to the harbour, or the man will be missing his passage, or else losing his luggage.

JOHN ROBERT AND JOHN JAMES.

Yes, ma'am!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Where's Miss Greeba?

CHRISTIAN ANN.

In her bedroom, dressing.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Is she going to the quay, then ?

CHRISTIAN ANN.

No, ma'am ! She's afraid she might break down at the last moment, and then people would be talking.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Did she say so ?

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Not to say *say*, ma'am . . . !

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Tell her she'll have to give the children their supper and put them to bed, while you slip across to Callow's to order the mill for to-morrow.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Yes, ma'am !

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Bring the dogcart round first, and don't forget the market basket. I'll drive down to town with the master and Mr. Michael, and bring up the provisions myself.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

But won't Miss Greeba be afraid to be left alone in the house at night, ma'am ?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Chut! She'll have her grandfather, won't she?
And what has the girl to be afraid of—is it bogganess
or fairies?

[GRANDFATHER *and the CHILDREN return.*
CHRISTIAN ANN *goes out by lower door*
right.

GRANDFATHER.

He has gone, Ruth—paid his debt to them with the
fore-topsail.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Who has?

GRANDFATHER.

The deserter from the ship Michael Sunlocks is to
sail by.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

That raggabash!

DANNY.

Nancy Kinnish saw him as he ran across the
market-place, mother.

MONA.

He was dripping wet, mamma, and looked like a
big drowned monkey.

DANNY.

The coastguard are chasing him with guns. I'm
going to tell cousin Michael..

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Then tell him it's only ten minutes wanting seven, and he has no time to waste if he wants to catch his steamer.

MONA.

Yes, mamma!

[The CHILDREN run upstairs and disappear into MICHAEL'S bedroom. The cart goes by filled with luggage.]

GRANDFATHER.

Why does he *want* to catch it?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Don't ask me, father.

GRANDFATHER.

Why does he want to go adrift from his moorings?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The young man might do better at home, if you ask my opinion.

GRANDFATHER.

Captain of the Laxey lead mine at six-and-twenty—*isn't* that good enough for anybody?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And if it isn't, here is this fine old farm going to waste for want of the right man to marry the girl and manage it properly.

GRANDFATHER.

And what's he getting instead of it? The place of engineer at the sulphur mines on one of the God-forsaken islands of Sicily.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Going further to fare worse, I say.

GRANDFATHER.

I've sailed to such places in my time, and I know what they are, daughter. No ginger-bread quarters I can tell you!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Convict settlements, seemingly.

GRANDFATHER.

In the midst of volcanoes too—smoking and smelling like pits of hell. And then the people . . .

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Brigands, they tell me.

GRANDFATHER.

As thick as flies in a honey-pot. Always rioting and rising in rebellion and upsetting the Government. There'll be trouble there some day, mark my word for it.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

There'll be trouble here, too, if Adam Fairbrother goes on neglecting the farm for his class-leading and colloquing and quoting Scripture night and day.

GRANDFATHER.

He can't help it, Ruth. He has swallowed the Old Book—he can't help bringing it up again.

[ADAM FAIRBROTHER comes out of his bedroom, knocks at MICHAEL'S door.]

ADAM.

Ready to sail, Michael, my man?

MICHAEL.

[*Within.*] I'm ready.

ADAM.

[*Coming downstairs.*] May we all be ready for the great sailing when we leave the harbour of life and put out to sea. [*Knocking at GREEBA'S door.*] Greeba!

GREEBA.

[*Within.*] I'm coming father.

ADAM.

Ah! vanity of vanities, all is vanity! The dear girl is putting on her pretty things that Michael may think of her at her best. Well, what does Jeremiah say, "Can a maid forget her ornaments?"

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Easy enough if they're not worth remembering. But that's just where you ruin your children, Adam Fairbrother.

ADAM.

Don't say that, mother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

But I do say it—dressing them up like dolls and sending them to schools and colleges, instead of teaching them to work in the fields and the dairy, as their mother did before them, and to look for husbands among such as are willing to live on the land, not fly away to foreign countries.

ADAM.

Maybe so, maybe so. But don't say it above your breath to-night, Ruth, or the poor boy will be broken-hearted. He's had enough to do to keep a good face to-day, and if we leave him to think—just when they're going to be parted—that while he is away——

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Tut!

ADAM.

Hush! Here he is—here are both of them!

[MICHAEL comes downstairs, with the CHILDREN hanging about him. GREEBA comes out of her room, followed by CHRISTIAN ANN. At the same moment a bell rings in the distance.]

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And there's the bell of the steamer, so we had better be off if we're going.

MICHAEL.

Only the first bell, Mrs. Fairbrother. Time enough yet. And now that we're all here together I have something to say

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Let Christian Ann slip round for the dog-cart then, and take the children away with her. Off with you!

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Yes, ma'am.

DANNY.

Nancy says he's fiercer nor a ferret and bigger nor John James—fifty times bigger—yes, five times bigger.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Who is?

DANNY.

The deserter what the coastguard are chasing with guns.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

That raggabash again! What on earth is the man to me? Away you go!

[CHRISTIAN ANN and the CHILDREN run out. MRS. FAIRBROTHER closes the door. MICHAEL places chair for GREEBA. All seat themselves.]

MICHAEL.

I've never yet told you why I'm going away, and it is only right I should tell you now.

ADAM.

As you please, sir; as you please

MICHAEL.

Naturally you think it's only to advance myself in life—to find a home for Greeba, even if it's far away and in a foreign country.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And isn't it ?

ADAM

Why not, wife, why not ?

MICHAEL.

It's that certainly ; but I have another reason, and I've said nothing about it yet—nothing to anybody, not even to Greeba herself.

GRANDFATHER.

Is it a secret then ?

MICHAEL.

Another man's secret, Grand-dad.

ADAM.

Another man's, you say ?

MICHAEL.

My poor father's.

ADAM.

I knew him. A good, Christian man, and a right gentleman, if ever there was one.

MICHAEL.

So everybody thought and said.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And wasn't he?

MICHAEL.

He was a good father to me, Mrs. Fairbrother—it isn't for his son to say otherwise. He was a good husband to my mother also, and she lived and died respecting him.

ADAM.

I knew her too—a real lady—under the sod these teens of years—and the man that fond of the woman, he never saw the sun from the day she died.

MICHAEL.

He had his secret fault, for all that—one of those dark passages of his early days which a good man sometimes keeps shut and sealed from the eyes of everybody.

ADAM.

Lord bless me! Stephen the Ballamoar! Vicar's Warden, too, I don't know the years!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Dear heart alive, Adam, can't you let the young man tell his story?

MICHAEL.

My father was not a native of this place.

ADAM.

True enough—"Stephen the Foreigner" we called him first.



MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL.

MICHAEL.

He was born in Sicily and came here in the days when trade between the two islands was better than it is now.

GRANDFATHER.

Oranges and lemons—I was in it myself, Ruth, when I sailed the old fruit-clipper to Palermo.

MICHAEL.

When he left his own country, he left it in disgrace.

ADAM.

Money, I'll go bail!

MICHAEL.

Worse than that, Mr. Fairbrother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Worse?

MICHAEL.

He had deceived a woman.

GRANDFATHER.

God bless my soul!

ADAM.

I thought he was a one-woman man, and hadn't eyes for anybody.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Some hussy, perhaps; some slut, some servant——

MICHAEL.

No; she was a good girl, it seems, and daughter of the Governor of Ustica in the worst days of the Kingdom of Naples.

GRANDFATHER.

I remember the man—Tommaso Testa—a real rascal—and living still, they're telling me.

MICHAEL.

He was a hard man, at all events, and when he discovered the disgrace his daughter had brought on his family he flung her out of the house.

ADAM.

Goodness mercy!

MICHAEL.

She had given birth to a child, a boy, and my father, God forgive him, behaved badly to both of them.

ADAM.

The heart of man is deceitful, sir, and desperately wicked.

MICHAEL.

He didn't intend to desert them, but being poor, he came abroad to make money, expecting to go back and make amends.

GRANDFATHER.

He never did go back, though?

MICHAEL.

Never! In this island he married another woman, my mother, and had another son, myself, and from that time forward the doors of his former life were locked to him.

ADAM.

Just so, sir, just so.

MICHAEL.

He lived to have houses and lands and to become honoured and beloved in the country of his adoption, but he was always tormented by the thought that down in the dregs of life these two might be living still, alone, neglected, and despised.

ADAM.

That's how it is, sir—it isn't our houses we live in, but our hearts, and your father's was full of trouble.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Serve him right, I say. The man who has sinned deserves to suffer.

MICHAEL.

He did suffer. He suffered to the last day of his life, and when he came near to the end he sent for me and told me everything.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Your father did? Your father told you that story? Why in the world did he do that, I wonder?

MICHAEL.

In the hope that what he had never been able to do for himself, his son might perhaps do for him.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Befriend the woman he had deserted and the child he had left fatherless.

MICHAEL.

That's what he asked me to do, Mrs. Fairbrother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

He asked the son of his wedded wife to stand friend to his—well, his bastard?

MICHAEL.

Yes.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Then I hope you refused.

MICHAEL.

No; my father was dying. I promised to do it.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

You should have remembered your mother, my man.

MICHAEL.

I did remember her, Mrs. Fairbrother, and that's why I couldn't forget the woman whose place she had taken, and the pain she would have suffered if she had known anything about it.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

You should have thought of yourself, then—your mother's lawful born son.

MICHAEL.

I thought of myself, too, and that's why I couldn't but think of the other son I had supplanted.

ADAM.

So you promised the poor dying man——

MICHAEL.

I promised him that, God willing, I would find the woman my father had wronged and be a son to her for my mother's sake.

ADAM.

But if she was dead and gone, poor soul?

MICHAEL.

Then I promised to find her boy and be a brother to him, for the sake of my father and perhaps myself.

ADAM.

And that's what you mean to do now, Michael?

[*Michael bows.*]

God bless you! It's Hagar and Ishmael over again! Only the son of Sarah is to save the son of the bondwoman.

MICHAEL.

I couldn't do it before, Mr. Fairbrother. I was young when my father died, and it wasn't at first I

saw my way clearly. But when the college of mining, knowing my connection with Sicily, secured me this post on the Island of Ustica, it was like Fate—I felt bound to obey.

ADAM.

You had to follow the spirit's leading—you couldn't help yourself.

MICHAEL.

It wasn't easy to me though, for in the meantime I had begun to live my own life, and my promise to my father was fighting with the duty I owed to myself. It is fighting with it still. That's why I have told you this story.

ADAM.

I know, I know.

MICHAEL.

I have signed for two years only, but even two years is a long time to be away when one is building all one's hopes on coming back.

ADAM.

Yes, yes, a man's heart may be pretty stout, but home is home.

MICHAEL.

[*Taking GREEBA's hand and standing by her.*] Mr. Fairbrother, Mrs. Fairbrother, Grandfather, my home, my heart, my life is here. I have to leave it with you. Give me your word that no man shall rob me of it while I am abroad.

ADAM.

I give you *my* word, and welcome. No harm shall come to the girl while you are away—none, if I know it.

MICHAEL.

Give me your word, too, Mrs. Fairbrother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

If my heart were here, I shouldn't go away if I were you.

MICHAEL.

I must. I could never forgive myself if I forgot the promise I made to my father.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Let every bird hatch its own eggs, my lad.

GRANDFATHER.

I agree with my daughter. Let every man stand on his own head, I say.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The woman and son your father left in his own country are nothing to us, and if Greeba has to wait while you go to find them . . .

MICHAEL.

That's past praying for now, Mrs. Fairbrother. I must go in any case, and I'll do my work, whatever happens. But Greeba is everything to me, and if I came back to find she was promised—perhaps married—to another man . . .

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

If I were afraid of that, I shouldn't go at all—I shouldn't think to go.

MICHAEL.

[*Affectionately.*] Don't say that, Mrs. Fairbrother. You've been like a mother to me since my father died, and I came to live in your house. But in two years so many things may happen, so many chances may befall. Mother! Grand-dad! Only give me your faithful word for it that nothing you ever do or say will be intended to take Greeba away from me, and that if I come back in two years' time . . .

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

If you come back in two years' time, you shall be welcome, if the girl is willing.

MICHAEL.

That's good enough for me, mother. And now, Greeba! You have given your word already, dear, but a man is a child when he is going on a long journey and leaving all he loves behind him, so give me your hand on it again.

GREEBA.

[*Who has been listening intently during the whole of the foregoing scene.*] I gave you my promise a year ago, Michael, and I haven't regretted it for a moment. I have always loved you, but never as I do to-day, and as long as you are true to me, there is nothing

but death can part us. I've never seen the man who could take me from you. I never have and I never shall.

MICHAEL.

[*Eagerly.*] Swear it, Greeba, swear it before everybody.

GREEBA.

[*Leaping into his arms.*] Never! So help me God!

MICHAEL.

I believe you! I trust you! I love you! And may the red blight fall on this hand and arm if any other woman ever comes between you and me! [*Disengaging himself and dashing the tears from his eyes.*] Shame on me! I'm only a woman of a man after all you see. But I feel strong enough to go now. [*Looking around the house.*] Good-bye everything and everybody! How I shall think of all this when I'm far away! The old house that has been my home these three years, and the good souls who are waiting for me here!

ADAM.

[*Wiping his eyes.*] Chut, man! It's only a hop, skip, and a jump, you know.

GRANDFATHER.

Turn the clock back a piece, and I'll go with you myself, Michael.

MICHAEL.

It's nothing, I know; going away for two years is nothing, but it gets at a man's heart for all that.

GRANDFATHER.

You'll weather it out, Sir! The girl will have hold of your tow-rope, and haul you home again fast enough.

MICHAEL.

Good-bye, Grandfather! Go up to your crow's nest outside, and you'll see the lights of our ship as she steams out of the bay. Where are the children?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

[*Looking off.*] Here they are, Micheal.

[*The dog-cart is driven round by CHRISTIAN ANN, and the CHILDREN, laughing and chattering, come running in. OLD PEOPLE take up their hats and go out. GREEBA goes to the piano.*

MICHAEL.

[*Lifting the CHILDREN in his arms one by one.*] Helloa! Danny will be a big man by the time I come back, but I must bring him a humming-top for all that. And Mona will be a dear little woman, but I'll fetch her a doll from the far country.

[*GREEBA begins to play very softly "Home, Sweet Home."* MICHAEL *drops the CHILDREN. They run up and out.*

MICHAEL.

[*Listening to the music.*] Don't break my heart, Greeba. I'm trying to crush down the foreboding that something will happen while I am away, and it isn't easy.

GREEBA.

[Rising and coming to him.] Nothing will happen, Michael. I want you to be thinking of home and to be always longing to return to it; but nothing will happen between you and me—no coolness or mistrust or estrangement—nothing!

MICHAEL.

Then nothing can happen at all—nothing in this world. Oh, what a coward a man is when he loves a girl like this, Greeba! God bless you and keep you while I am away!

GREEBA.

Good-bye, dear!

MICHAEL.

Greeba, put the lamp in the window when you hear the last bell, and I'll see it as we sail out of the bay. "Greeba is there," I'll think; "she's thinking of you, Michael."

GREEBA.

Have pity on us both, Michael. Good-bye!

[Kissing him.]

MICHAEL.

Again! For the last time! Good-bye!

[With a cry that seems to tear his heart, he runs out and leaps into the dog-cart.]

ADAM.

[Driving.] Ready? Let her go then.

[The dog-cart goes off, amid shouts and cheers from the OLD MAN and the CHILDREN, who follow it afoot.]

[GREEBA stands in the middle of the floor alone, helpless, all her courage oozing away. CHRISTIAN ANN comes back and bustles about, lighting lamp and laying table. It is growing dark.]

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Well, I'm not much of a woman for a man myself—they're only poor helpless creatures at the best—but if I had to put up with one of their persuasion, it's somebody of that sort I should have—somebody that loves a girl shocking, and isn't ashamed to show it.

GREEBA.

[*With a helpless cry.*] My Michael has gone over the sea! Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Don't take on like that, Miss Greeba. It's cruel hard when the ocean has to roll between two loving hearts, but better that than worse should divide them—jealousy and deceit and such like. Mr. Michael is true. There's only one woman in the world for him. If he had to travel to the end of the world he wouldn't see a petticoat from here to Timbuctoo.

GREEBA.

God bless you for that, Christian Ann! It's the one drop of dew that has fallen on me to-day. Michael will come back!

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Of course he will, miss, and then you'll be cried in

church, and sing "Hail, smiling Morn!" with the best of them. I have to slip across to Callow's to order the mill, but I'll put on the porridge for the old man and the children, and you'll only have to give them their supper and send them to bed. Them Callow girls—they're pretty beauties! When they're not trying to take other people's sweethearts, they're always talking about bogganies and fairies. There—you've nothing to do now but to pour it out, while I slip on my sun-bonnet and fetch the children's night-dresses.

[CHRISTIAN ANN goes in left, as GRANDFATHER and CHILDREN return to the house, DANNY on GRANDFATHER'S back. GREEBA pours porridge from pot into basins.]

GRANDFATHER.

Too late to see the ship from the crow's nest to-night, so we'll say good-bye to her from our bedrooms.

MONA.

[Quarrelling with DANNY.] Cousin Michael *didn't* see you last.

DANNY.

He did.

MONA.

He didn't.

GREEBA.

Don't quarrel to-night, dearies, but eat your porridge and get yourselves undressed.

[Re-enter CHRISTIAN ANN, in sun bonnet.]

CHRISTIAN.

Here are their nighties, and I'll be back before the mistress gets home to supper.

[Hangs night dresses on a "maiden," and goes out, closing door behind her.]

GRANDFATHER.

[Eating.] Ah! home is a full cup, but it wouldn't have taken much to make me go along with him. It's a wild country though, and what with their Mafias and their murders, you never know what may happen. Hagar and Ishmael! The lad's doing right to look for them. They're his kith and kin, and the man who can't warm to his own flesh and blood——

GREEBA.

It's good of you to say that, grandfather. Mother was so hard on him.

GRANDFATHER.

Tut! A woman's tongue—who cares about a blow from that? She has nothing else to hit with, bless her! Tomasso Testa, though! The other son can't be much worth saving, if that's the ilk he comes of. *[Rising.]* A light supper makes an easy bed. Good-night, Greeba!

GREEBA.

Good-night, grandfather! *[Exit GRANDFATHER.]*

[Meantime the CHILDREN have finished their supper and undressed. MONA is kneeling at GREEBA's knee.]

MONA.

[*Saying her prayers.*]

“Dear Father, whom I cannot see,
Smile down from heaven on little me,
Let angels through the darkness spread
Their holy wings about my bed,
And keep me safe, because I am
My Heavenly Shepherd’s little lamb.”

DANNY.

[*Kneeling by MONA.*] “God bless father and mother and grandfather and Greeba and Mona and Christian Ann—and——” [*Looking up.*] Anybody else?

MONA.

[*Looking up.*] Cousin Michael, stupid!

DANNY.

“And Cousin Michael—he’s going away to Sicily.”

GREEBA.

“And bring him safely home again——”

DANNY.

“And don’t not let him forget my humming-top.”

MONA.

“And my dolly.”

GREEBA.

“God guard this house throughout the night . . .”

MONA and DANNY.

[*Together.*] "And keep it safe till morning light. Amen."

[*The CHILDREN jump up. GREEBA takes lamp.*

MONA.

God will have lots to do to-night, won't He, Greeba?

GREEBA.

Yes, indeed, dearie. [*They go into room on right. The stage is empty. It is now dark and there is no light but the red glow from the turf fire. The second bell of the steamer rings in the distance. Then the outer door opens stealthily, and a face looks in. It is the fugitive SAILOR, who was seen in the picture. His eyes are wild; his hair tangled; his clothes torn; he has the look of a hunted dog. He creeps in, leaving the door open, listens, looks round; sees the table laid out with food, goes up to it and eats voraciously—all the while listening and watching. During this silent scene GREEBA returns, carrying the lamp and humming softly, "Home, sweet Home." She puts the lamp on the window-board and looks out into the darkness; then, turning about, she sees the FUGITIVE, half starts in terror at the sinister apparition, and stands with open mouth, as if unable to utter a cry. Meantime the MAN has seen the GIRL, and after*



MR. ARTHUR COLLINS.

watching her for a moment, he makes for the door. But he has only advanced a few paces when GREEBA'S face becomes calm, and she boldly steps between.

GREEBA.

Who are you ?

JASON.

[*With the growl of a wild beast.*] Let me go !

GREEBA.

What did you come here for ?

JASON.

Can't you see ?—food and drink.

GREEBA.

Then why didn't you ask for it ?

JASON.

[*Looking astonished.*] Ask ?

GREEBA.

If you are hungry, sit down and eat.

JASON.

[*With a look of stupefaction.*] You tell me to sit down and eat ?

GREEBA.

[*Taking up the pot and pouring out porridge.*] There is some porridge left, and here is some milk fresh from the cows.

JASON.

Wait a moment! Are you alone in this house?

GREEBA.

Except for two children and an old man.

JASON.

How do you know I am not a thief or a murderer?

GREEBA.

Sit down at the table.

JASON.

You are only a woman, a girl, yet you are not afraid of me?

GREEBA.

You are a man. A man doesn't hurt a woman—it's only a brute—a beast. You are hungry and thirsty. Sit down—you are welcome.

JASON.

Hold on—this will not do. First let me tell you what I am. I am a deserter from the steamer that's anchored in the bay. You would hear the gun they fired when I went overboard. Your bluejackets are after me, and I've knocked down a good many to get away from them. [*Fiercely.*] They shan't have me, if I can help it. No, by God! But if they take me here, it will be an ugly business, and you may get into trouble.

GREEBA.

Sit down and take your supper.

JASON.

[*Softening.*] You mean it? You are willing to let me stay? You tell me to eat! Is this an inn? What are you?

GREEBA.

This is my father's house—I am my father's daughter.

[*He hesitates, then sits down, tries to eat; stops; his face is marked with emotion; his eyes wander about the room, then come back to GREEBA.*

GREEBA.

You are not eating.

JASON.

I can't eat. I felt frightfully hungry when I came into this house, having eaten nothing all day, but I don't know what I feel now—it has passed over.

[*He shudders.*

GREEBA.

You are cold?

JASON.

I swam ashore from the ship—my clothes are not yet dry.

GREEBA.

[*Turning another chair.*] Come up to the fire and warm yourself.

JASON.

[*Taking the new chair.*] Your family are out?

GREEBA.

[*Throwing fresh logs on the fire.*] Yes, they have gone down to the harbour to see a friend away by the steamer.

JASON.

The steamer? A friend?

GREEBA.

A gentleman who has been living with us for three years and is now going to Sicily.

JASON.

Sicily?

GREEBA.

Is that where you come from?

JASON.

Yes. Who is he?

GREEBA.

A young engineer. He is to be head of the sulphur mines in Ustica. You know them, perhaps?

JASON.

[*With a shudder.*] I do.

GREEBA.

Convict mines, are they not?

JASON.

[*Again with a shudder.*] Yes.

GREEBA.

You come from Sicily—yet you speak the English language. How is that?

JASON.

I served my time on an English ship, and besides—— [*Rising.*] But I must go—your family will be back soon.

GREEBA.

You look tired and cold—stay till you are warm and rested.

JASON.

You are very kind to me—nobody has ever been kind to me before.

GREEBA.

Nobody?

JASON.

Only one—only one in all the world.

GREEBA.

Is that your wife?

JASON.

I have no wife.

GREEBA.

Your sister?

JASON.

[*In a breaking voice.*] It was my mother.

GREEBA.

Is she dead then?

JASON.

[*With a smothered sob.*] Yes.

GREEBA.

You have suffered. What is your name?

JASON.

Jason.

GREEBA.

Who is your father?

JASON.

I have no father—none I ever knew.

GREEBA.

Did he die in your childhood?

JASON.

No.

GREEBA.

And yet you never knew him?

JASON.

Never.

GREEBA.

[*Eagerly.*] Then—perhaps he had wronged your mother?

JASON.

[*In a low tone, with a flash of rage.*] Yes, God curse him! He was a low-born man and she was the daughter of the Governor . . . [*Breaking off.*] But what does that concern you?

GREEBA.

[*More eagerly.*] It does concern me.

JASON.

He deceived and wronged her, and then fled away to another country. Her father cast her off, and she was left alone. That was soon after I was born, and through all the years that followed hope in her poor heart fought with fear, and fear with love. He would come back some day and make it up to her even yet. So she used to go down to the beach and watch and watch for the ships that came from foreign ports.

GREEBA.

[*With a look of apprehension.*] Ah!

JASON.

One day an English schooner came to Ustica.

GREEBA.

Ustica?

JASON.

"He is coming in that," she said. "Something tells me he is coming in that ship at last."

GREEBA.

He didn't come?

JASON.

[*Fiercely.*] No, but news of him did. In the country he had gone to he had married another woman and she had borne him another son.

GREEBA.

Oh!

JASON.

My mother's heart was broken. She never raised her head again. But before she died she called me to her. "Jason," she said, "I gave him all—I took a father's curse for him. If you ever meet your own father, remember what your mother has borne for him." And then in a whisper—there was none but God and me to hear—"Remember!"

GREEBA.

Oh! Oh!

JASON.

[*In the paroxysm of passion, his eyes filling with tears and flashing with the lust of vengeance.*] My father had killed my mother! Not in a day or an hour, but in twenty long years! Then I swore an oath before heaven: "I will hunt the world over until I find that man, and when I have found him I will kill him! If he should die and we should never meet, I will hunt the world over until I find his son, and when I have found him I will kill him for what his father did to my mother—yes, by God I will.

[*Greeba listens with a look of horror. There is a moment's silence.*

GREEBA.

[*Breathlessly.*] Is that why you have come here?

[*He nods his head.*

Why you have deserted your ship?

[*He nods again.*

Then your father is living on this island? No?

[*He shakes his head.*

JASON.

He did live here, but he is dead. I heard that in the last port we called at.

GREEBA.

Then why have you come ashore?

JASON.

To find his son—the son who has taken my place—supplanted me—robbed me of my birthright. If his father is dead, *he* is alive; but before he lives much longer he must meet with me.

[GREEBA rises suddenly, walks with a firm step to the outer door, shuts it, locks it and takes out the key. He rises and watches her.

JASON.

Why did you do that?

GREEBA.

[*Facing him boldly.*] To keep you here.

JASON.

To keep me *here*!

GREEBA. ~

[*Impetuously.*] Until that steamer sails and you can do no mischief.

[*He starts. She realises that she has betrayed herself.*

JASON.

[*His face undergoing a sudden transition.*] Do you mean . . . What sort of a house is this?

GREEBA.

A farmhouse.

JASON.

What is the name of the farm?

GREEBA.

Lewaige.

JASON.

And the name of the man who is sailing to Sicily?

GREEBA.

What's that to you?

JASON.

Is it Michael Sunlocks?
Tell me.

[*She is silent.*

GREEBA.

[*Firmly.*] I will not.

[*The hideous expression comes back to his face and his voice becomes hoarse and formidable.*

JASON.

[*Laying hold of the hand which holds the key.*]
Give me that key.

GREEBA.

I won't.

JASON.

Will you give it up?

GREEBA.

No!

[*With a brutal twist he wrests the key out of her hand and makes for the door.*]

JASON.

[*Laughing savagely.*] I was a fool to tell you that story; but you were right—it *did* concern you,—and the devil himself must have tempted me to talk.

GREEBA.

Where are you going?

JASON.

Back to the steamer.

GREEBA.

I'll warn the Captain.

JASON.

[*With a savage glance.*] You won't!

GREEBA.

He'll punish you.

JASON.

Not if I return of myself before the bluejackets take me.

[He tears open the outer door and with a monstrous laugh is going out, when a voice is heard outside.]

VOICE.

Front and back—surround it.

GREEBA.

[With a look of joy.] The coastguard!

[The tramp, tramp, tramp of the COASTGUARD is plainly heard.]

JASON.

[After drawing back and listening.] They're here. It's your turn now. Do what you like with me.

GREEBA.

[To herself.] Michael's brother!

[She thinks for a moment, then opens the door of her own room down right.]

GREEBA.

[In low voice.] Go in there. *[He hesitates.]* Quick!

JASON.

[Putting his hand on the knife in his belt.] Take care—remember what I told you.

[He goes into the room defiantly. SHE closes the door behind him. FOUR COASTGUARDS enter, armed as in the picture.]

FIRST COASTGUARD.

Has a strange man been here to-night ?

GREEBA.

What do you mean by a strange man ?

SECOND COASTGUARD.

A brutal looking blackguard with bare feet, and scoundrel and cut-throat written all over his face.

GREEBA.

I've seen no such person.

THIRD COASTGUARD.

Knew it was a false report. People on the road said he had run this way, so we followed on.

FOURTH COASTGUARD.

But who would be green enough to come down this *cul de sac* when he had the mountains to fly to ?

FIRST COASTGUARD.

Deserter from the Sicilian steamer, Miss Fairbrother. Under squad articles for a voyage from Palermo and home again. Dangerous man, it seems. Good thing for you he didn't come this way.

SECOND COASTGUARD.

Good thing for him too. If we had caught him here it would have been bread and water and the black hole until he reached home again. That Captain's a Tartar.

THIRD COASTGUARD.

He'll have to sail without his man this time, though. Third bell will be ringing soon. Let's get back to town, boys.

FOURTH COASTGUARD.

[*After lighting his pipe at fire.*] Well, good-night, Miss Fairbrother.

SECOND COASTGUARD.

Mr. Michael is sailing with the steamer, they say! A right gentleman that---no pride with a poor man. Good night!

FIRST COASTGUARD.

And if you're alone, you might turn the lock in the door, you know. Good night!

GREEBA.

[*At door.*] Good night!

[*They go off merrily. GREEBA listens until the tramp, tramp, tramp of their departing footsteps has died away; then goes to door right and throws it open. The MAN comes out with a stupefied look, his head down, broken, crushed.*

GREEBA.

[*Vehemently.*] They are gone, and now you can go too. The man you are looking for is to sail by the ship you have come from. He is my friend, my sweetheart my promised husband, and he expects to come back in two years' time, and then we are to be

married. He is also your brother, your father's son, and while you have come here with murder in your evil heart against your father and against him, he is setting out to your own country to save your mother and to help you. Your story is sacred, your secret is safe. Now go, if you have no more man in you—go, if you can, if you dare.

[JASON stands as one dumbfounded. There is a moment of silence, in which he is seen to go through a fierce struggle. Then without a word, and in a state of stupor, he walks towards the door. Half-way up he stops and speaks in a low, broken voice.

JASON.

I will go, but I will not follow him. I do not wish to follow him now. God forbid that I should hurt one hair of his head, if he is anything to you. While I waited in that room something spoke to me, and now everything is changed. You have never seen me until to-night, yet you have fed and sheltered me. I threatened the life of the man you love, yet you saved me from arrest. I intended to take your own life if you gave me up, yet you protected me from punishment. You were brave, but you were merciful, and now you leave me free. God forgive me! God help me! God pity me!

[He goes up to the door and stops again. A strange softening comes over him. GREERA is visibly moved.

I shall never forget you. You have been very good to me. Nobody else ever has. I haven't a bad heart, but the world has turned me into a brute by cruelty

and wrong. No matter! When people spurn me and kick me again, I'll think of this house. I'll remember you. Good night! God bless you!

[HE goes out, leaving the door open. SHE stands, deeply moved. The lamp which she has placed on the window-board dies down and goes out. Then the third bell of the steamer rings in the distance. She listens. The voices of SAILORS singing as they weigh anchor is heard from the bay. There is a steam whistle, then a moment of silence, and then CHRISTIAN ANN comes bustling in.]

CHRISTIAN ANN.

In the dark! Has the lamp gone out, then?

GREEBA.

[With a start.] Light it again, Christian Ann.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Just what I'm going to do, miss.

GREEBA.

Quickly!

CHRISTIAN ANN.

As quick as I can pour in the oil. [Attending to lamp.] The steamer is gone, miss. As I came down the lane she left the harbour, and I waited till she rounded the head. And what do you think? Such an extraordinary thing! When I came to the gate I found a man kneeling on the ground with his face to the house, just sobbing like a child, and when I spoke to him . . .



MR. HENRY AINLEY AS "MICHAEL SUNLOCKS."

[VOICES *outside.* *The dog-cart returns, with lamps lit.* ADAM and MRS. FAIRBROTHER enter, followed by the TWO FARM HANDS. *All bustle.*

ADAM.

Well, your boy has gone, Greeba. He sent his last love to you. Good thing you were not there though, for I believe in my heart he would have broken down altogether.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Bring in the market basket, John James; and you stir up the peats, girl, and let's have something to eat.

ADAM

Ah, it isn't everybody that has a good fire and a savoury supper to come home to to-night—that poor deserter, for instance.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The lazy raggabash has got clear away. What do you people pay the police for, I wonder?

JOHN ROBERT.

We met the coastguard on the road, ma'am. They had given up the chase and were going back.

JOHN JAMES.

And now that the steamer has sailed, the rascal can go Scot free, you know.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Christian Ann, see the doors are bolted front and back to-night. And, John Robert, take care you put padlocks on the barns, too.

ADAM.

Why so? Are we in any danger?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Danger, indeed! With an abomination like that prowling about!

ADAM.

Who knows what he is, wife? If he is a rascal he may be repentant, and even if he is a thief he may be penitent.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Perhaps you would like to ask him to your own table and lodge him next yourself, then?

ADAM.

Why not, if he's what I say? "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth . . ." What's that?

[There is a loud, slow knock at the door. ALL stand a moment. Then ADAM walks to the door and opens it. JASON stands on the threshold—a changed man.]

JASON.

I tried to pass your door, sir and I couldn't do so.

ADAM.

Who are you?

JASON.

I am a runaway from a ship, and she has gone, and I come to ask for work and shelter. I've no character to show, and there's nobody to speak for me. But something tells me to come to your house. "Good people live there," it says. "It is the home of gentleness and pity and love." I am strong, I am well, I am willing to work for my bed and board—will you take me in?

ADAM.

[*With emotion, to his wife.*] Ruth, we have a bed to spare to-night that hasn't been empty these three years. We'll let him sleep in that and talk about work in the morning. [*To JASON.*] Come in brother! You are welcome!

[*JASON steps into the house. He looks round until his eyes fall on GREEBA. They follow her about with doglike devotion, as the curtain slowly descends.*]

THE SECOND ACT

SCENE.—*The "street" of the Farm. A picturesque group of buildings. "Mansion House," dairy, cow-house, sheds for cattle, stable, entrance to stack-yard, showing corn-stack (half built), pump, water trough, flagstaff, gate to fields and to lanes going right and left. A large tree with a seat under it in foreground. In the background an undulating landscape showing corn-stacks in a new-cut field.*

When the curtain rises it is early morning and the day is dawning. The mist rises and the grey light gives way to soft sunshine. The air is full of the joyous sounds of nature—running water, the singing of birds, the cawing of rooks, the cooing of doves, the humming of bees, the bleating of sheep, and the lowing of cattle. A bull's head is seen over the half-door of the bull shed. The blinds in the house are down—nobody is stirring.

After a moment a voice is heard in the distance, and JASON appears at the further end of the corn-field singing a merry chorus. He is a changed man. The wild appearance is gone, and a look of content and happiness has taken its place. He is dressed well, in corduroy breeches with red field

boots, a red shirt under a jacket hung on one shoulder and a soft straw hat. There is a gun under his arm and some game birds are hanging from his belt. A sheep dog follows at his heels. He comes through the gate of the corn-field into the "street" in front of the house, and when abreast of the porch he stops singing and speaks to the dog.

JASON.

[*Pointing to the house.*] Speak, man! Waken them!

[*The dog barks, a window opens, and two little heads appear, MONA and DANNY, both yawning.*

JASON.

Wanted to be wakened early to-day, didn't you, little ones?

DANNY.

Is it morning already, then?

JASON.

Morning it is, laddie—look at the sun on the tops of the corn-stooks.

MONA.

[*Whispering down.*] Has it come yet, Uncle Jason?

JASON.

Has what come, dearie?

MONA.

You know, has it?

JASON. ~

[*Whispering up.*] Hush! It came in the night when all the world was asleep.

DANNY.

Where is it now?

JASON.

In the cart shed yonder, waiting for two little people to dress it up with flowers. So if you want to take Greeba by surprise when we crown her queen——

DANNY.

I'm coming down.

MONA.

Me too.

[*The two little heads disappear. JASON goes up to cow-house and rings a bell that hangs from the roof, crying "Now, boys! Now girls, time to be up!" Then he sings to himself again as he takes the birds from his belt. Another window opens and GREEBA's face appears. He does not see her at first, and to attract his attention she sings a bar of his tune. He looks up, smiles, and takes off his hat.*

GREEBA.

Out on the hills again, I see.

JASON.

All night long, Greeba.

GREEBA.

Then you haven't been to bed?

JASON.

That's nothing—nothing for me. Besides, I should have been ready to kill myself this morning, if I could have slept last night.

GREEBA.

You've had good sport, then?

JASON.

Sport? Oh yes, I've had sport enough. I'm not thinking about that, though.

GREEBA

What——?

JASON.

Don't you know, Greeba? Can't you remember? Have you forgotten what you said in the spring? "Not yet," you said. "Don't speak to me yet—not until harvest."

GREEBA.

[*Gravely.*] Ah!

JASON.

To-day is the last day of the harvest, you know, and I couldn't sleep last night for thinking of it. What a glorious night it was, Greeba. Everything seemed to speak to me of one thing, and that was the dearest thing in all the world. Every star that shone seemed to shine for me. Every breeze that

blew seemed to bring me a message. Every bird that sang as the daylight dawned seemed to sing the song of my heart and hope—"To-morrow—to-morrow—to-morrow." Greeba!

GREEBA.

Yes, Jason?

JASON.

Are you crying, Greeba?

GREEBA.

Oh, no! Not to say crying—— But——

[*A voice within cries "Greeba."*]

Mother is calling me. I must go.

JASON.

Say I may speak to you again, Greeba?

GREEBA.

By-and-by, perhaps.

JASON.

By-and-by!

[*She goes in. He draws a long breath of happiness. The FARM SERVANTS come trooping in from the back of the house, a large company of MEN and GIRLS with sickles, scythes, milking-stools and pails—all very sulky and sleepy.*]

JASON,

[*In a loud voice.*] Now, boys! Now, girls! We have to save the last of the harvest to-day and leave time for supper. Dairyman!

JOHN ROBERT.

[*Grumpily.*] Yes, sir.

JASON.

Harness your little mare and slip away to town with the morning's milk and bring back the letters from the post-office. Cowman!

JOHN JAMES.

I'm here, sir.

JASON.

Get your girls to their milking immediately, and fetch out the cow that kicks, so that Liza may milk her in the open. Christian Ann!

CHRISTIAN ANN.

[*Cheerfully.*] Here I am, Jason.

JASON.

[*Giving her the birds.*] Put these in the pot for the harvest supper.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

I will.

JASON.

Give us our food in the fields this morning—we've no time to sit at table to-day.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

That's true, sir.

JASON.

Now, ding-dong, boys, bend your backs and let's make an end of it.

[He takes up a sheaf of corn from the foot of the stack and goes into shed on left, singing as before. The CHILDREN come running out of the house and follow him. FARM HANDS do as directed.]

JOHN ROBERT.

[Sulkily.] Did you hear him?

JOHN JAMES.

[Ironically.] Was he speaking, think you?

JOHN ROBERT.

Was he screaming over the place like a sea-gull?

JOHN JAMES.

Only two years on the farm and he has the upper hand in everything.

JOHN ROBERT.

Washed ashore like a drowned dog the day before yesterday and now it's "Dairyman, do this," and "Cowman, do that."

LIZA.

So distant with a girl too! He hasn't got eyes for nobody.

LIZZY.

[With a glance at GREEBA'S window.] Nobody except—somebody, you know.

LIZA.

No use having his eyes there, Lizzy.

LIZZY.

Haven't you heard the news, then?

LIZA.

What news, woman?

LIZZY.

Her promised man is dead.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Who says he's dead?

LIZZY.

Well, that's the news in town, Christian Ann.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Is it?

LIZZY.

People say he must be dead—so long away and nothing heard of him.

JOHN JAMES.

Dead or alive, if he doesn't come home, it's all the same to this one.

JOHN ROBERT.

The last dog is sometimes catching the hare, and if he ever comes to be son-in-law——

LIZA.

He'll never be that, though. Her sweetheart may come back yet and then——

JOHN ROBERT.

Then it will be drowned dog again perhaps.

LIZA.

And serve him right for keeping his eyes so high.

[*All laugh except* CHRISTIAN ANN.]

CHRISTIAN ANN.

You would love to see it, wouldn't you? What has he done to you? What has he done to any of you? If he has made himself head man on the farm in three years it is only because he has worked harder than all the rest of the men put together. As for son-in-law, if it comes to that, the young mistress might go farther and fare worse if you ask me. A fine strapping man with a clever head and a cheerful face—I'm taking joy to look at him, and if Mr. Michael isn't going to come home——

JOHN ROBERT.

Oh, marry the man yourself, woman, and let's have done with it.

[*All laugh bitterly. JASON returns with a scythe on his shoulder and the CHILDREN skipping by his side. During the following scene the milk-cart is driven out, the cows come from the cow-house and disappear over the field and the farm hands go off. Meantime JASON sharpens his scythe by the seat under the trees with the CHILDREN on either side of him.*]

JASON.

Will it do, little woman?

MONA.

It's beautiful, it's splendid—it's as nice as nice.

DANNY.

And did it come last night by the steamer from Sicily?

JASON.

That's so, little laddie.

MONA.

Do all the people in Sicily have carts like that?

JASON.

All the country people have, and when the harvest comes round the children cover them with flowers.

MONA.

Do they have a Queen in that country too?

JASON.

Yes, a Queen of the Harvest anyway.

MONA.

And does she cut the last of the corn? And do they crown her with cushags and drive her home in the cart?

JASON.

Just the same as here, dearie.

DANNY.

Do the boys ride the ponies and the girls hold the reins, and the men run alongside and pelt her with poppies?

JASON.

The same—the very same!

MONA.

And when she comes to the house do the men kneel round her, and does she choose one of them to be King and promise to marry him in a year?

JASON.

All the same as in my own country, little ones.

DANNY.

I'll ride the pony.

MONA.

And I'll hold the reins.

DANNY.

And Greeba will be Queen.

MONA.

And Uncle Jason will be King.

DANNY.

How can that be, silly? Cousin Michael is to marry Greeba.

MONA.

You just want me to say what mother said about that, but I won't—I won't!

DANNY.

Don't, you silly.

MONA.

She said Uncle Jason should marry Greeba if he wanted to. And isn't mother——

[MRS. FAIRBROTHER comes to the door of the house.]

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

What are you children chattering about? Away with you!

JASON.

[*Putting up his scythe stone.*] Run to the meadow for the flowers, little ones.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

[*Calling back.*] Christian Ann! Set the churn and table under the tree—too hot to make butter indoors to-day.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

[*Inside.*] Yes, ma'am!

[CHILDREN *whisper* to JASON.]

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

No whispering! Away you go!

[*The CHILDREN run off merrily. GRANDFATHER comes to the door of house with telescope under his arm.*

Wonder you can be bothered with the little brats when you've so much on your hands, Jason.

JASON.

[*Going out.*] No bother to me, Mrs. Fairbrother. God bless all children! Their little laughing voices are the running water of the world.

[*He goes off with the scythe on his shoulder, and singing as before. GRANDFATHER comes down to seat during following scene. CHRISTIAN ANN and MAID set churn and table under tree. GRANDFATHER cleans his telescope. The distant rattle of the Reaper and the voices of the shearers come at intervals from the harvest field.*

GRANDFATHER.

Wonderful the change in that man since he came to this farm.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Wonderful the change in this farm since that man came to it. The banks and the lawyers were settling down on the land like crows on a dead horse. He has shot them flying and now the farm is free.

GRANDFATHER.

[*Sitting.*] Some of your neighbours are finding that out, Ruth, and tempting him away from you.



ACT. I.

JASON (MR. FRANK COOPER) SWEARING VENGEANCE
AGAINST HIS BROTHER.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

They may save themselves the trouble, grandfather. Jason is staying for something more than his wages.

GRANDFATHER.

Greeba? [MRS. FAIRBROTHER *nods*.
Will she take him, think you?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Will she or won't she—don't ask me!

GRANDFATHER.

It's thinking of Michael that's wasting the woman.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

She ought to think of somebody else besides herself or Michael either. If Jason leaves us what is to become of the farm? *I* can't do everything.

GRANDFATHER.

Danny is a child—it will be long before he is old enough to help.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

His father is a child, too, and it will be longer still before he'll spare a thought from the other world to take a look at this one. Religion is well enough in its way, but what sensible woman wants every day in the week to be Sunday?

GRANDFATHER.

I like to think of religion as an inn. You drop in now and again on your way through life, drink a draught to stir you up a bit, then out and on again.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Yes, but some people seem to think it a hospital and are always wanting to die there.

GRANDFATHER.

[*Rising.*] A match between Greeba and Jason would be a good thing for everybody. But will she marry the man—that's the question!

[ADAM FAIRBROTHER *comes out of the house.*

ADAM.

No, she will not, grandfather, and it's no use bothering about it.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Why will she not, Adam Fairbrother?

ADAM.

Because she's thinking of the absent one, bless her.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The absent one isn't thinking of her, apparently.

ADAM.

Appearances deceive the wisest, good wife. The young man is far away—you don't know what he is thinking about.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

I don't, indeed. A year over his time, and not the scribe of a line from him.

ADAM.

He went out on an errand of mercy—it may be a longer task than he expected. But long or short, we gave him our promise, and how are we fulfilling it?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

He gave us *his* promise too—his promise to come back in two years' time—and how is he fulfilling that?

GRANDFATHER.

He may never come back, Adam. You know what rumour and report are saying.

ADAM.

Rumour is a deceiver—and report a common liar. Let us listen to hope and love.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Go on, go on! My girl is wasting her prime and her father is encouraging her.

ADAM.

Don't say that, Ruth.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Crying and whining about somebody who is at the other end of the world, while a man worth six of him is here and waiting.

ADAM.

I say nothing against Jason. But it's poor work forcing a girl into the arms of a man she doesn't love.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Tut! she'll come to love him. Once a girl's married to a man she can't be always thinking about her other sweethearts.

GRANDFATHER.

Unless the husband is a fool or a brute, and you wouldn't expect that of Jason.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The domestic hearth, the marriage bed, the children that come to keep the love-pot boiling, and the husband always there, always caring for her—where are her thoughts of the other ones then, think you?

GRANDFATHER.

Once married to Jason the girl will be all right, Adam.

ADAM.

The man is a monument of saving grace—I've always said so. And sometimes he reminds me of my dear Michael—I can't tell why—but I looked for better things for Greeba than to marry a plain farmer like myself.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

What was good enough for her mother ought to be good enough for her. I might have wed with some-

thing better myself, perhaps, but I didn't, and have I ever rued the day, dear?

ADAM.

[*Flattered, and touching her caressingly.*] Well—I leave it with you. Speak to the girl yourself, wife—and here she comes, look you!

[*GREEBA comes out with large plate and butter moulds. A cart laden with corn-sheaves has drawn up, and ADAM climbs a ladder and mounts the stack.*

[*The CHILDREN run in with armsful of flowers, meet GRANDFATHER, whisper to him, and run off to shed. GRANDFATHER goes up to his crow's nest and looks out to sea. During the following scene, CHRISTIAN ANN churns, and MRS. FAIRBROTHER and GREEBA make butter, mould and stamp it. Sheaves are forked up and stack finished.*

GRANDFATHER.

[*To CHILDREN.*] Oh! Oh! That!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Whispering again! Some secret with Jason . . . That's what I call a man, Greeba. Up early and late—not a lazy bone in his body.

GREEBA.

Indeed, no!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

You have to summer and winter a man before you know him, and I think we know Jason by this time.

GREEBA. ~

I think we do, mother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

So changed since he came here. It's marvellous.

GREEBA.

Indeed it is.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Your father thinks it's saving grace, but I don't! I think it's something more substantial—[*whispering*] I think it's a girl.

GREEBA.

Oh!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

That man worships the ground you walk on, Greeba.

[*GREEBA confused.*]

He is going to ask you to marry him—I can see he is—and he'll break his heart if you refuse.

[*GREEBA still more confused.*]

You don't want the death of a man like that on your conscience, do you? And then he is so useful to the farm and so necessary to the family! You would be an ungrateful girl not to do what everybody wants.

GREEBA.

I am sorry if everybody's happiness depends on me, mother, but I have given my promise to Michael, and I cannot break it.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Nonsense! What's a promise, anyway? Words! And what are words? Wind! The first comer gets a young girl's word before she's aware of it, but is she to waste her life for that?

GREEBA.

I gave him my oath—my solemn and sacred oath.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

What is an oath, either? An oath is like ready money. If it's good, it's good, and you try to keep it. But if it's bad, it's bad, and a sensible person gets rid of it at the first opportunity.

GREEBA.

I gave him my promise because I loved him. And if a girl loves a man, there is nobody else in the world for her.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Fiddlesticks! Girls fretting themselves into their graves because they can't get the first man they fancy! One woman for one man and all other men nowhere. That's a wicked lie, and it has killed more good folks than all the wars of a century.

GREEBA.

He said nothing and nobody should come between us.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Did he? Well, the cow that lows the most doesn't always milk the most. But I wonder at you, Greeba, a year since he ought to have been back——

GREEBA.

A year and two months, mother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And a score of letters written to him since then, without an answer to any of them.

GREEBA.

He may be on his way home.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

He ought to have written before sailing.

GREEBA.

He may be ill.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

He might have got somebody else to write then. No, the best you can say for him is what—what they are saying in town, Greeba.

GREEBA.

[*With emotion.*] Then if he is gone—if he is dead—let me think myself his widow.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Widows marry sometimes—I've heard of the like, anyway. But Michael isn't dead. Married himself, more like—married to another woman in another country.

GREEBA.

Don't say that, mother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

His father did the same thing, didn't he?

GREEBA.

Ah!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Where there's an amble in the sire it will be in the colt, Greeba.

GREEBA.

Oh!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

If I were a girl I should be ashamed to mourn for a man who is married to somebody else, perhaps. What! Cry for another woman's husband!

GREEBA.

Oh! Oh!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Don't let people think you are breaking your heart for one who doesn't care for you. You know how people talk. Those Callow girls—their tongues are going like the mill-race.

GREEBA.

[*Hurt and indignant.*] What are they saying?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

They wanted Michael when you got him, and now they are saying he has given you the go-by.

GREEBA.

[*Her pride wounded.*] It does seem foolish to wait for some one who doesn't care enough to write once in twelve months.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Indeed it does.

GREEBA.

If he is alive, it is unpardonable—making a girl suffer and exposing her to gossip.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Just when another good man is eating his heart out too. Somebody will snap him up if you don't. Those Callow girls are jealous of you again, and if they get half a chance with Jason——

ADAM.

[*From the top of stack to somebody out of sight.*] Helloa! Helloa! . . . Callow's two daughters are coming across the field, Ruth.

[*A bell rings from the bay.*]

GRANDFATHER.

[*From crow's nest.*] And there is the steamer that came into harbour last night getting up steam to go out again.

[*Both come down. The cart goes off. CHRISTIAN ANN carries new butter into house Enter two YOUNG LADIES in muslin dresses and showy hats.*

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

Good morning, everybody!

ALL.

Good morning!

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

We thought we would just come over to see you take the Melliah.

[*The Reaper stops. There are shouts of "The Melliah." Enter JASON.*

JASON.

We've cut all but the last sheaf of the corn Mrs. Fairbrother. Who is to be Queen?

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

Why, Greeba, of course.

JASON.

Will you come, Greeba?

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

Of course she will! Pity she can't do all the Queen should do, though.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER

Why, what——?

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

Choose her king and say the rhyme about wife within a year, you know.

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

How can poor dear Greeba do that, Dora? Her sweetheart being away and she knowing no more than the man in the moon if he'll ever come back again.

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

That's the worst of a man. He may stay away a dozen years, yet he expects a girl to wait for him.

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

And if she does wait what does he think of her? That she's been true and faithful? Oh dear no—that she has never had another offer.

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

Generally the fact too! No man who has any pride likes to take another man's leavings—does he, Jason?

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

So the poor girl has to encourage the rumour that he's dead, and wear black and pretend to be his widow.]

JASON.

Are you coming, Greeba?

GREEBA.

[*Going towards the house.*] Presently.

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

[*Going out.*] Why not now?

GREEBA.

Because I want to wear black, dearest, and pretend to be his widow.

[*She goes indoors laughing hysterically, the CALLOW GIRLS giggle, nudge each other, and go up towards field.*]

ADAM.

Well! The young unchristian cats!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

I'm not sorry—it will show the girl what people are saying.

GRANDFATHER.

Speak to her, Jason—now's your chance, my man.

JASON.

But is it fair? Isn't she promised to somebody else? Doesn't she love him still?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

How can she love a man who leaves her open to taunts and jeers like that?

JASON.

I'm only her father's servant. Won't it be like eating a woman's bread, ma'am?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

What does it matter whose bread it is so long as there's plenty of it? Besides, two faggots burn better than one, and I want a son-in-law who will stay on the farm and keep my daughter here also.

[She goes up and out]

GRANDFATHER.

Not fly off to foreign parts and get lost in earthquakes and eruptions. *[He goes up and out.]*

ADAM.

You have my good will as well, Jason.

JASON.

You heard what she said, sir?

ADAM.

[Laughing.] About wearing black? Ah, the heart of a girl is a dark forest. Who knows what she'll wear when she takes the Melliah. Speak to her. It may be the best for all of us.

[He goes up and out.] CHRISTIAN ANN comes out of the house.

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Lord save us alive! if ever I wanted to be a man until this day.

JASON.

Where's Greeba?

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Indoors dressing, and if ever you saw anything in all this world so—so—so—so—well—if *I* were a man I'd know my tack.

[She goes up and out laughing and looking back. After a moment GREEBA comes out of the house, dressed in white and red, wearing a sun-bonnet and carrying a sickle—a picture of radiant loveliness. She is visibly excited.]

GREEBA.

Let us go.

JASON.

Not yet. I have your father's permission to speak to you—your mother's also—your own as well. Sit down. *[She sits—he stands beside her.]*
Greeba——

GREEBA.

Well?

JASON.

[Faltering.] Greeba——

GREEBA.

Yes?

JASON.

[Passionately.] You know what I wish to say, Greeba. I love you. Can you love me in return?
Can you? *[She drops her head.]*

I'm not much of a man for you, Greeba! But whatever I am, I love you, my lass, I love you!

[She does not speak, his deep voice is broken by supplications.]

You can never think how much you've been to me, Greeba. Before I came here I was a sort of wild creature. But you were good, and my heart ran out to you. You had faith in me, and my wild passions fled away. *[She is moved.]*

You have made a man of me, Greeba. Only to be near you these three years past has changed me altogether. Let me be near you always, and what I was before I shall never be again.

GREEBA.

It is very sweet of you to say so, Jason, but if you knew——

JASON.

I do know. I know what you told me on the night I came here first—of the man who had gone away—of the promise you had given him. That's why I have stood aside and waited so long, though it has cost me dear. And if you tell me to wait longer—no matter how long—as long as Jacob waited for Rachael——

GREEBA.

It wouldn't be right to do that, Jason. I cannot ask you to wait for those who neglect and forget me. And yet——

JASON.

There is one who can never forget you, Greeba. Morning and night you are with him, for he loves



MR. HENRY NEVILLE AS "ADAM
FAIRBROTHER."

you dearly. There isn't a man born who loves a woman as he loves you, because he has nothing else to love now—nothing in this world.

GREEBA.

[*Breathing irregularly.*] If it is really true that your happiness depends on me . . .

JASON.

It does, it does.

GREEBA.

If everybody's happiness depends on me . . .

JASON.

You will consent?

GREEBA.

[*Rising.*] Take me, take me.

JASON.

[*Throwing his arms about her.*] My love! My love! [*She is crying and laughing hysterically.*] You will never regret?

GREEBA.

Why should I regret? It is not as if I had broken faith with somebody.

JASON

You will never cry again?

GREEBA.

Why should I cry? No, I will never cry again for one who has broken faith with me and is unworthy of a tear.

JASON.

You will try to forget everything ?

GREEBA.

Why shouldn't I forget ? I'm not one of the women who pine and die because a man goes away and doesn't come home.

JASON.

But if he should come home ?

GREEBA.

[*Laughing and crying together.*] I'll send him back again. I'll ask him if he thinks he can play fast and loose with a girl for three years—making her the talk of the parish and the by-word of everybody. And then I'll show him how happy I am with the man I've married—the man who really loves me, and lives for me, and thinks of nothing in the world but me. Cry ! I'll not cry, I'll laugh—I'll laugh in his face until he flies out of the house.

JASON.

[*In a whirlwind of joy and triumph.*] Flower of my heart ! When shall it be ?

GREEBA.

Soon—the sooner the better.

JASON.

Christmas—Michaelmas—Martinmas ?

GREEBA.

Sooner still—immediately.

JASON.

And so it shall. I'll go to the High Bailiff and get a special licence. That will please you better than being cried in church. I'll slip away while you are taking the Melliah and they are crowning you Queen. Then at the harvest supper I'll announce the news and take everybody by surprise.

GREEBA.

Yes, yes, the harvest supper! Those Callow girls will be there. They'll see they can't jangle and jeer about me.

*[Shouts outside: "Greeba! Greeba! Greeba!"
a number of GIRLS run in for her.]*

GREEBA.

I'm coming! I'm here!

[With a wild burst of laughter she flies out with the GIRLS. JASON stands a moment distracted with joy. THE MILKMAN returns with milk cart.]

JOHN ROBERT.

[Coming down to JASON and offering letters rather insolently.] You told me to call for the letters. Here they are. Only two. One for the Master, the other for Mistress Greeba.

JASON.

[*Without looking.*] Put them in the house.

[*THE CHILDREN heard shouting outside.*

JOHN ROBERT.

[*Showing parcel.*] Here's a parcel for the children, too.

JASON.

[*Listening.*] Put that in the house also. Or wait! Leave it in the cart-shed—they'll be back there presently.

[*He goes out singing to himself like a man on wings.*

JOHN ROBERT.

[*Looking after him contemptuously.*] Wouldn't look at them, eh? Not even at the post-mark.

[*Whistles to himself and throws the parcel off left, then crosses to house on right.*

I said drowned dog again, didn't I? We'll see!

[*Chuckles and goes into house with letters.*

Stage empty for a moment, then come shouts from the harvest field. "Hurrah for the Melliah!" The first verse of a hymn is sung outside. This is followed by shouts of "Hurrah for the Harvest Queen!" THE MILKMAN comes on and listens, then takes off his van. At next moment GREEBA is drawn in on a Sicilian cart, gorgeously painted in red and gold, and decorated with wild flowers. She is crowned with poppies and carries the last

sheaf of the corn bound with red ribbon. DANNY rides a pony as postillion. MONA holds ribbon reins. GIRLS run alongside. MEN pelt the Queen with flowers. ALL shout and sing the harvest anthem. Cart draws up, singing ceases, and a goblet is handed up to the Queen, who rises and drinks.

GREEBA.

[Excitedly, chanting the old rhyme.

“As Queen of the Harvest, a-ring-and-a-ring,
I pledge me, my subjects, to choose me a King,
As sure as I drink of this barleycorn beer
I’ll be wedded and wived ere the turn of the year.”

[Laughter and cheers. ADAM, MRS. FAIRBROTHER, GRANDFATHER, and the CALLOW GIRLS come in.

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

Has she had a letter, I wonder?

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

I wonder!

GREEBA.

[Observing them and leaping down from cart.] A dance! A dance!

[Cart driven off left. Ring formed, GREEBA and GIRLS dance, MEN clapping time.

ADAM.

Stop! Stop! *[Dancing stops.]* Custom must be indulged with custom, or custom will die. But now go—clean up—make all straight—then come back for the harvest supper.

[Cheers again. MEN and GIRLS go off skipping with straw skipping ropes. ADAM goes into house. CALLOW GIRLS go out. GREEBA stands panting under tree and watching them go. The CHILDREN come running out of cart shed with parcel.]

MONA.

Mother! Greeba! Grandfather!

DANNY,

Something for me!

MONA.

And me!

GRANDFATHER,

[Looking at parcel.] What's this? A foreign post-mark—Sicily!

GREEBA,

[Gasping.] Sicily!

GRANDFATHER,

Must be from Michael.

GREEBA.

[Breathless.] Michael!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER,

[Observing GREEBA.] Take it in adoors, children, and Christian Ann will cut the string.

[With shouts of glee the CHILDREN go into house with CHRISTIAN ANN as ADAM comes out holding two letters, one open.]

ADAM.

Now you that be women, control yourselves and listen while I speak. I've news—good news.

GREEBA.

It's something for me, isn't it? I feel giddy. Let me sit down.

ADAM.

Was I too sudden? Hold yourself firm, Greeba.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The girl is no fool, father. She has borne bad news before to-day and if this is good——

ADAM.

It is good. Michael—our dear Michael—is not dead at all.

GREEBA.

[*With a cry of joy.*] Ah!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

That's good enough as far as it goes. Go on.

ADAM.

He's not married either—of course he's not.

GREEBA.

Stop! Let me make sure. Is there no mistake? Is it true?

ADAM.

Gospel true, Greeba. Michael is alive and well and waiting for you still.

GREEBA.

[*Almost fainting in her joy.*] Ah!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Then why hasn't he come home, if you please?

ADAM.

Because he couldn't.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Why hasn't he written, at all events?

ADAM.

He has been a prisoner and couldn't write—couldn't get letters either.

GREEBA.

A prisoner?

ADAM.

A political prisoner—trying to upset a bad government and banish a bad governor.

GRANDFATHER.

I know! Tommaso Testa! I always said the rascal would raise a revolution.

ADAM.

It's over though, and now Michael is a great man.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

A great man!

ADAM.

He is Governor.

GRANDFATHER.

Governor of Ustica! That's a billet worth something I can tell you.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And here we've been blaming the poor boy without a cause!

ADAM.

He hasn't forgotten old friends though. He would like to come home, but he can't—so he asks for Greeba to go out to him.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

She shall too! Certainly she shall! Why, of course, she shall! She shall go by the very next steamer.

ADAM.

[*Reading from letter.*] "For the errand I came out to fulfil I arrived too late. The poor mother was already dead, and before I reached these shores the son had gone from them—but—" I'll read it all after supper, though. But my head's all through others—here's a letter for Greeba. I had forgotten all about it.

GREEBA.

[*All the joy gone from her face.*] For me?

ADAM.

Why, yes! Do you suppose he would write to us without writing to his sweetheart?

GREEBA.

His sweetheart?

ADAM.

Aren't you glad?

GREEBA.

Glad?

ADAM.

You can do what you want to now—and no one to say nay.

GREEBA.

But what about Jason?

[*A pause.*]

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

[*Coldly.*] Well, what about him?

GREEBA.

You told me to take him if he asked me to marry him.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

And have you?

GREEBA.

Yes!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Well, you were in a hurry—I will say that for you

GREEBA.

He has gone to the High Bailiff for the licence.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

He was in a hurry, too, it seems to me.

GREEBA.

[*With feeling.*] And now it turns out that while I have broken faith with Michael, and been so cruel and so false to him, he has been in sorrow and suffering and unable to speak. Oh, what can I do? What can I do?

[*Everybody is silent. The voice of JASON is heard outside ; he comes in with a paper in his hand, singing his student's song, and looking radiantly happy.*

JASON.

[*Looking at them.*] I see! Greeba has told you, then?

ADAM.

[*With constraint.*] Yes, Greeba has told us, Jason.

JASON.

What's amiss?

ADAM.

Nothing is amiss—not to say amiss, you know.

JASON.

[*Looking again.*] Yes, by Heaven, but something is amiss. What is it?

ADAM.

Well, to tell you the truth, there's a letter come from Michael.

JASON.

Michael?

ADAM.

The young man who went away the night you came.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

The one Greeba is engaged to.

ADAM.

He is not dead as everybody supposed, but alive and well. In fact, fortune has come to him with both hands full. He is Governor now—Governor of your own island—and he asks for Greeba to go to him.

JASON.

Greeba—to go to him.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

To be married to him, of course, the moment she reaches the country.

JASON.

She can't do that.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Why can't she?

JASON.

She won't.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

She must—she can't help herself.

JASON.

But she gave her word to me—here, on this spot—not half an hour ago.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

She gave it to him before that, though. And promises to marry are like promises to pay—first come first served, I suppose.

JASON.

You didn't say that before, Mrs. Fairbrother. You told me to speak to her.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Perhaps I did, but circumstances alter cases. You are a fine lad and I like you well; but I like my daughter better, and when it comes to choosing a husband for her——

GRANDFATHER.

Between a Governor-General and a servant on her father's farm——

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

You are too much of a man to wish to eat a woman's bread—you said so yourself, remember.

JASON.

And you said I had done something for the land and you wanted Greeba to stay on it.

[MRS. FAIRBROTHER *is silenced*. GRANDFATHER *comes to her relief*.]

GRANDFATHER.

Maybe she did, but still——

JASON.

[*Turning on him.*] . . . and not fly away to foreign countries.
[GRANDFATHER is silenced.]

ADAM.

It's not a question of here or there, Jason. We that be men may make our homes where fortune leads us, but a young girl lives in the world of her own heart, bless her! Greeba's world is with Michael. You wouldn't keep her here against her inclination?

JASON.

Is this from Greeba as well as you, sir?

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Greeba is an obedient daughter. What her father says she'll agree to.

JASON.

I'll speak to herself for all that.

ADAM.

That's only fair, mother.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

It won't be fair, though—if anybody tries to persuade the girl against her parents' wishes.

GRANDFATHER.

Against her interest too. The tide doesn't rise twice in a woman's life, my lad.

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

As for yourself, you must take the horns with the hide, you know.

GREEBA.

Mother!

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

If you have done something for the farm, the farm has done something for you, since we took you up and made a man of you.

GREEBA.

Mother!

ADAM.

Listen to your own heart, Greeba. You know my wish, but do what your heart says now and your father will stand to it.

[They go into house, all shamefaced. JASON and GREEBA are left alone. During the following scene GREEBA tears the flowers out of her hair, and JASON destroys the paper which he holds in his hand.]

JASON.

I could take my answer from you alone, Greeba—what is it to be?

GREEBA.

If we had only waited a little longer!

JASON.

I waited three years, Greeba. Has anything happened since we stood on this spot before?

GREEBA

A letter has come from Michael.

JASON.

What of that? You said just now that if the man himself came home it would make no difference—— You wanted our wedding to be soon, you didn't care how soon. I went off to the High Bailiff for the licence. Here it is.

GREEBA.

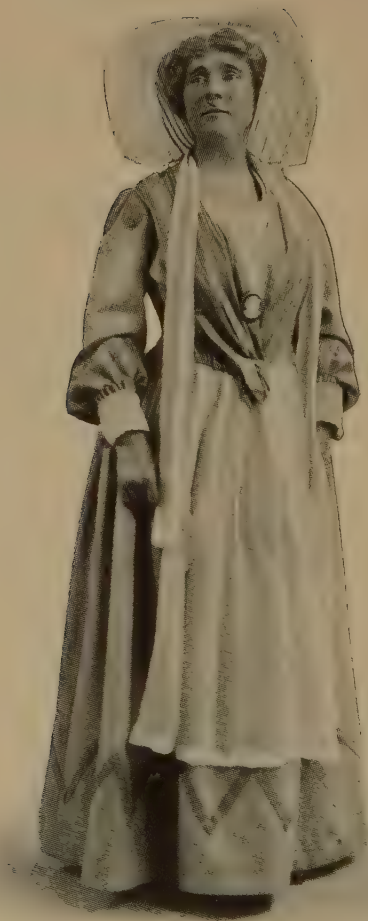
Oh, if this letter had arrived yesterday!

JASON.

Yesterday or to-day—it's all the same to me, Greeba. I'm not the man to hold a girl against her will. But neither am I the man to be trifled with. I said a while ago that I would wait seven years for your answer. I won't wait seven hours now—no, not half an hour. So speak out, girl, and speak quick—has the coming of this letter made any difference?

GREEBA.

Forgive me, Jason, forgive a poor heart-broken girl who has behaved ill to you though she didn't mean to. I ask your pardon. I trust to your generosity to let matters drop between us. I cannot—I must not—I dare not marry you.



MISS MARIE ILLINGTON AS "MRS. FAIRBROTHER."

JASON.

Why not, Greeba?

GREEBA.

Because now I know—I know——

JASON.

. . . You do not love me?

GREEBA.

[*Almost inaudibly.*] Yes.

[*A pause.*]

JASON.

[*With emotion.*] Greeba, I thought there wasn't a man in the world who loved a woman as I love you, but perhaps I haven't loved you enough.

GREEBA.

Don't say that, Jason

JASON.

I'm only a rough fellow, not fit to touch the hand of a lady—perhaps a lady could never stoop to me.

GREEBA.

Don't say that either.

JASON.

I'm poor, but I'm strong, I can work. You shall never want for anything. I'll give you—all.

GREEBA.

Don't! Don't!

JASON

You could never think how fast and close my love would grow. It would make you forget all the difference between us

GREEBA.

It isn't your fault that I cannot love you, Jason. It is because——

JASON.

Well ?

GREEBA.

Because I love somebody else. I thought my love for Michael was dead, but I deceived myself, and at the first word from him it has all come back. My pride has gone. I don't care what people say about me now. He wants me to go to him, and I must go.

JASON.

And what must I do, Greeba ? [*She covers her face.*] I've not had a happy life, you know, but I looked to being happy at last with you. [*She begins to cry.*] It was so sweet to be a good man among good men—I was beginning to love everything and everybody because I loved you, Greeba. [*She cries audibly.*] It's hard when the night falls on a man after his sky has seemed so blue. [*She sinks on to seat.*] You've been the one gleam of light and hope in my life since my mother died, and now——

[*She cries bitterly. He lets her cry for a moment, then recovers himself and touches her tenderly on the shoulder.*]

JASON.

Don't cry like that, Greeba.

GREEBA.

Forgive me! Forgive me!

JASON.

[*Assuming a light air.*] There's nothing to forgive. We can't *make* ourselves love anybody—none of us can—it's no use trying.

GREEBA.

[*Drying her eyes.*] It's good of you to look at it like that, Jason. And bad as things are, they might have been worse, mightn't they?

JASON.

Why, of course they might.

GREEBA.

If, for instance, these letters had arrived after our marriage instead of before it.

JASON.

Just so! Just so!

GREEBA.

I should have been a sorrowful woman then with a guilty and shameful secret.

JASON.

Perhaps! Perhaps!

GREEBA.

So it may be for the best in the end, Jason.

JASON.

Everything is for the best in the end, Greeba.

GREEBA.

You think that, really?

JASON.

Really!

GREEBA.

[*Brightening.*] Yes, Michael is your own brother after all, and who knows but this may bring you together somehow, and wipe out the cruel feud between you.

JASON.

Who knows? Who knows?

GREEBA.

I've said nothing about that to anybody. It was your secret, and I promised to keep it. But if I should ever come back and Michael with me——

JASON.

Ah!

GREEBA.

[*Her face shining with joy.*] It is so beautiful to think that love may become a bond between you—love for somebody—for me——

[JASON *shudders and a ghastly expression crosses his face. At same moment a window from the house is opened and MRS. FAIRBROTHER'S voice is heard calling :*

MRS. FAIRBROTHER.

Greeba !

GREEBA.

[*Going.*] I'm coming ! [*Returning to him.*] You are sure you will not grieve or fret about this when I go away ?

JASON.

Why should I—since there's no help for it !

GREEBA.

It is a great blow to you—I know that.

JASON.

[*Trying to laugh.*] Perhaps it is, but I wouldn't give the snap of my fingers for a man who couldn't take a knock-down blow and get up again. I've taken a good many in my time, Greeba. I'll get over this one.

[*He takes her hand and leads her a few paces.*

GREEBA.

How brave you are, and how happy you make me ! A few minutes ago I was the most miserable girl in the world—now I'm the happiest girl alive. I'm in paradise.

[*She runs in tearing open her letter and reading it eagerly.*

JASON.

And I am in hell!

[He sinks on to the seat under the tree and stares blankly in front—a gong is sounded in the house and the FARM SERVANTS return and pass into the house for the harvest supper. Happy LADS and LASSES, with their arms about each other's waists, chattering and laughing as they go through. LIZA and LIZZY come down.]

LIZA.

Will she go to him, think you?

LIZZY.

Where's the woman that wouldn't go? He's as handsome as a picture and as bright as a new pail.

LIZA.

And he has a tongue that's as sweet as honey when he is talking to a girl—not like some of the big bores about here who don't know a girl from a gorse-bush.

[They see JASON, giggle and go into house. JOHN ROBERT and JOHN JAMES come down—they see JASON, laugh, wink and nudge each other.]

JOHN ROBERT.

Drowned dog I said, didn't I?

JOHN JAMES.

So you did, John, so you did.

[They go in, chuckling. The CALLOW GIRLS come down, see JASON, speak loudly.]

FIRST CALLOW GIRL.

Too bad though—making a convenience of the poor silly thing.

SECOND CALLOW GIRL.

Serve him right, I say. Anybody could see she has been just spoiling for the other one ever since he went away.

[They go in laughing. CHRISTIAN ANN comes out with the gong in hand, sees JASON and approaches him.]

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Oh, here you are! We're sitting down to supper, and Master is going to read Mr. Michael's letter. Don't want to come? Not surprised neither.

[JASON continues to stare blankly in front.]

I'm sorry for you—I really am! You can't stay on the farm much longer—how can you? With him likely to come home at any time, and you to be servant to both of them.

[JASON does not seem to hear.]

All the parish has heard of it already, and the parson is going to ring the church bell. It will be Mr. Michael here and Mr. Michael there, and——

[There is a ripple of laughter and the CHILDREN come running out of the house, DANNY carrying a humming-top and MONA a doll.]

MONA.

See what cousin Michael has sent for me!

DANNY.

And see what he has sent for me.

[He spins his top in front of JASON.]

MONA.

[Putting doll up to JASON's face.] Isn't she sweet?
Isn't she just like Greeba! *[To doll.]* You cry, I kiss
you, you not cry no more.

DANNY.

Look! Why don't you look, Uncle Jason?

[JASON does not seem to see.]

CHRISTIAN ANN.

Jason isn't well to-day, children—let us go in to supper.

[The children pick up their toys and run back, laughing. CHRISTIAN ANN follows them. JASON is left alone. The church bells begin to ring a merry peal in the distance. A voice is heard inside the house reading.]

ADAM.

[Voice within.] "Although three years have passed since I left the little island, my sweetest thoughts are always of the old home and of the dear souls who are waiting for me there."

[A chorus of approval. JASON turns his head. His face is now convulsed with pain.]

JASON.

[*In a low, broken, vibrating voice.*] He has supplanted me again! He robbed me of a father! Now he robs me of a wife! Oh, I must be a woman of a man or I couldn't bear it.

[*Rattle of plates and delighted cries from within.*

Mother, forgive me! The oath I took over your dead white face has been forgotten. Forgive me, forgive me! The vengeance I vowed over your broken heart has been lulled to sleep by dreams of love. Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me!

[*A burst of laughter comes from the house.*
JASON'S face undergoes an awful change.

But your cause is my cause now, your hate my hate, and what I swore to do shall yet be done.

[*He rises to his feet.*

God, give me that man into my hands! He has taken everything I had in the world. He has stolen all the love and tenderness out of my life! He has made me a thing to pity and to spurn. Curse him! Damn him! Let him not escape me any longer—let me meet him face to face!

[*Another burst of laughter from the house.*

JASON drops back to the seat and buries his face in his hands.

[*The stage is empty—all is quiet and peaceful. Sun setting, pigeons cooing, birds singing, lambs bleating and a line of cows coming across the fields. The church bell is pealing merrily in the distance, ADAM'S voice is heard from the house.*

ADAM.

[*Voice within.*] "My hands are full of anxious labour, and my presence here is necessary, but only say that Greeba may come to me—to be my wife—and I will lose no time——"

[*Shouts of joy and approval coming from within as the curtain slowly descends.*

THE THIRD ACT

SCENE : *Interior of President's house on the Island of Ustica (Sicily). A beautiful chamber with distinction and dignity. Large oval window at back. Fireplace. Folding doors to right leading to Hall. Staircase and doors to left, leading to inner apartments. Small door under stairs leading to Porter's room below. Writing desk laden with papers.*

It is late afternoon. The sun is shining into the room. Through the window the opposite side of street is seen, showing houses of Sicilian architecture, with balconies, sun blinds, &c.

When the Curtain rises a procession of Students is passing down the street singing a Students' chorus, and a SERVANT MAID is looking out at window. Singing dies away; door bell rings; MAID goes out and presently returns, followed by elderly GENTLEMAN in frock coat, tall hat, &c., and a MAN in the costume of a Sicilian porter. The MAN is JASON. He is pale and haggard.

MAID.

Sit down, Doctor Boni.

DOCTOR.

Thanks!

MAID.

Housekeeper is upstairs. I'll tell her you are here.

DOCTOR.

[*Sitting.*] No hurry, my child. You were looking at the procession?

MAID.

Yes, sir, the procession that is going to the pier to bring up the President.

DOCTOR.

Yes, the President and his bride, home from their honeymoon. Anybody coming with them?

MAID.

Nobody that we know of, sir.

DOCTOR.

Nobody from the lady's own country?

MAID.

Not to sleep in the house, sir.

DOCTOR.

Ah!—— Tell the housekeeper I'm waiting for her.

MAID.

Yes, sir.

DOCTOR.

Say I've brought the porter I spoke about.

MAID.

I will, sir.

[MAID goes out left. DOCTOR rises and speaks
in low voice to JASON.]

DOCTOR.

This is the President's house, you see.

JASON.

I see.

DOCTOR.

I knew it well in the old Governor's days, and it cannot be much altered. The domestics sleep on the floor above; the porter on the floor below. There is a door out of the porter's room that leads to a blind alley at the back. You follow me?

JASON.

Yes.

DOCTOR.

A porter is wanted in this house, and you would like me to recommend you for the place. I'm willing on one condition.

JASON.

What?

DOCTOR.

That you leave the door to the blind alley unbolted when you go to bed to-night.

JASON.

Why so?

DOCTOR.

Why ask unnecessary questions? I don't. You wish to be porter here—I don't ask why. You are brought to me by a drunken, unbeneficed priest—I don't ask for a better reference. I don't know for certain who you are or where you come from, and yet——

JASON.

Enough said, sir. It matters nothing to me.

DOCTOR.

Good! Let me look at you again. Yes, the old priest was right. You have the face of my old friend, the old Governor.

JASON.

[*To himself.*] God!

DOCTOR.

If you are the grandson of Tommaso Testa you have little reason to love the new President. Blood may be thicker than water, yet it's not so thick as gall.

[*Jason groans and turns aside.*]

But if you have little reason to love the President, the old Governor has less, and should anything happen while you are living here, and the old man comes into his own again—— Hush!

[*THE HOUSEKEEPER comes down stairs—a simple, quaint, garrulous old lady.*]

HOUSEKEEPER.

My dear Doctor Boni ! How good of you to take so much trouble.

DOCTOR.

It's a pleasure. This is the man I spoke about for the place of porter.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Ah !

DOCTOR.

His name is Giovanni——

HOUSEKEEPER.

How fortunate ! The last porter was Giovanni also.

DOCTOR.

He can begin work now, and fetch his belongings by-and-by.

HOUSEKEEPER.

That is fortunate, too, for the President will be here presently. And what a comfort to have the recommendation of one so shrewd and careful ! The President is so trustful—so unsuspicious.

DOCTOR.

How beautiful !

HOUSEKEEPER.

But how dangerous ! And in a place like this, too, so full of plots, it's terrible.

DOCTOR.

Well, yes, certainly.

HOUSEKEEPER.

The President is such a marked man, so young, so clever, so successful !

DOCTOR.

Quite true !

HOUSEKEEPER.

There must be many who are jealous of him, and would like to pull him down.

DOCTOR.

No doubt.

HOUSEKEEPER.

The old Governor, for example, and his secret friends and followers.

DOCTOR.

Ah !

HOUSEKEEPER.

That's why I say—and the Marshal says so too—the President ought to have the police about him always.

DOCTOR.

And has he ?

HOUSEKEEPER.

He won't hear of such a thing.

DOCTOR.

Does he take no precautions to protect himself ?

HOUSEKEEPER.

None whatever.



MR. LIONEL BROUGH AS "GRANDFATHER."

DOCTOR.

No fire-arms in the house? Not even a revolver?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Nothing. He wouldn't even have the doors fastened on going to bed if I didn't see that the Porter bolted them. And to think what might happen—in the middle of the night too—— Oh, my gracious!

DOCTOR.

But now that you'll have a strong young man like this sleeping in the house——

HOUSEKEEPER.

Yes, indeed, thanks to you, Doctor.

DOCTOR.

You'll want to give him his orders. And then your party will be here soon, so I'll say good-bye to you.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Good-bye, and thank you, Doctor Boni.

[DOCTOR *goes out*. JASON *remains*.

HOUSEKEEPER.

[*To* JASON.] Do you know the President?

JASON.

No, ma'am.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Not even by sight?

JASON.¹

No.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Then he doesn't know you, either?

JASON.

How can he?

HOUSEKEEPER.

It's just as well. He might have a shock if he saw you here. [JASON *starts*.] He doesn't know yet that Giovanni is dead. Giovanni was a drunkard, and the very day after the President went away, he fell over the balcony outside this window and killed himself. Better keep out of the President's way until I have time to explain. [JASON *bows*.] He has just been married, I may tell you. Married a lady from the country he comes from. She landed at Lermo, and they went to church almost immediately. Such scenes! Such rejoicings! Everybody welcomed her for sake of the President. He is so respected, so beloved. [Jason *shudders*. Housekeeper *takes up photograph*.] This is her portrait in her wedding-dress. [Hands it to JASON.] Isn't she beautiful? Such a bright, brave, faithful-looking face! You shall see for yourself, Giovanni—to-morrow morning—to-night, perhaps. [JASON *gives back photograph*. His hands *tremble*.] And now I must tell you your duties, Giovanni.

JASON.

Yes.

HOUSEKEEPER.

You will live in the Porter's quarters. They are at the bottom of this staircase. In the morning you'll pump water for the baths and in the afternoon you'll chop wood for the fires. You'll not be seen too much upstairs, but at nine every night you'll sit on the stairs outside this door.

JASON.

Why then?

HOUSEKEEPER.

That's when the President attends to his correspondence, being alone for the first time in the day, and the servants gone to bed. At ten, eleven, perhaps twelve, he'll touch the bell, so—— [*Ringing hand-bell on desk*] and you'll come in for the letters, and take them to post in time for the morning mail.

JASON.

He is here every night, you say?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Every night.

JASON.

Alone?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Quite alone.

JASON.

At nine o'clock.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Nine o'clock.

JASON.

Will he be here to-night at nine?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Probably. Better sit outside the door in any case
—— What's that?

[*The sounds of singing in the distance. MAID comes running in.*]

MAID.

The procession is coming back.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Don't let him see you yet, Giovanni. Go down to your room, and as soon as the party come in take their boxes up the back staircase.

MAID.

[*Looking out.*] There he is.

HOUSEKEEPER.

[*Also looking out.*] Yes, and he's waving his hand to us. [*Waving back and crying.*] "Salute! Salute!"

MAID.

There's the mistress, too! The President is pointing us out to her.

HOUSEKEEPER.

And she is—no—yes, she's waving too. [*Curtseying*]

and crying.] "Salute, madame, salute!" Isn't she sweet? Isn't she the sweetest thing that ever——

[They run out in great excitement. JASON stands for a moment listening to the joyous shouts and cheers outside; then he goes in by small door. At the next instant, MICHAEL enters with GREEBA and the MARSHAL OF POLICE, followed by HOUSEKEEPER and MAID.]

MICHAEL.

Here we are! But how fresh! How beautiful!

HOUSEKEEPER.

You like it, sir?

MICHAEL.

Martha! Maria! *[To GREEBA.]* These are the good souls who took care of me before you came, Greeba. They've been freshening up the house for us.

GREEBA.

Charming!

HOUSEKEEPER.

[Kissing her hand.] But it's not finished yet, ma'am.

MICHAEL.

Not finished?

HOUSEKEEPER.

The house of a young couple is never finished until there's a cradle and a child in it. *[Laughter.]*

MARSHAL.

The students of the Latin School want to speak to the President.

MICHAEL.

Bring them in, Marshal. [MARSHAL *goes out*. MICHAEL *takes off* GREEBA's *cloak*.] Take this, Maria. And let your mistress have some English tea, Martha.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Yes, indeed, sir.

MICHAEL.

[*Embracing* GREEBA.] Home at last, dearest! My home, your home, our home! May it never be darkened by a cloud. [MARSHAL *returns, followed by* STUDENTS.] Come in boys! What is it?

STUDENT.

We hold our annual reunion to-night, sir, and hope you will honour us with your company.

MICHAEL.

Where?

STUDENT.

At the Students' Hall.

MICHAEL.

When?

STUDENT.

At nine o'clock.

MICHAEL.

Good! I'll join you at supper if my wife will excuse me at dinner.

STUDENT.

We hoped Madame also——

MICHAEL.

No, she's tired. You must excuse her. But I'll come myself if you'll not keep me long. When a man is only six days married, absence from his wife is like the law of gravitation—the farther you go from the centre of attraction, the faster you want to get back to it. [Laughter.]

STUDENT.

We'll bring you back, sir.

MICHAEL.

Nine o'clock, boys!

STUDENT.

Nine o'clock, sir. [STUDENTS go out cheering.]

MICHAEL.

[To GREEBA, kissing her hand.] Now go in and dress and come back for tea, dear.

[GREEBA goes in by staircase. As she does so, STUDENTS sing, going down street. Their song is the same that JASON sang. She hears it and listens.]

[At desk, turning over papers.] Petitions, appeals, demands, threats—all the humorous and pathetic

hodge-podge! What's been going on while I've been away, Marshal?

MARSHAL.

Only some subterranean movements of the late Governor.

MICHAEL.

Poor old man!

MARSHAL.

Of course he has denounced you to the King as a dangerous revolutionary.

MICHAEL.

And what has the King done?

MARSHAL.

Nothing that we know of. But the Governor hasn't been idle, nor his friends either. Some of them pretend to be friends of yours, too.

MICHAEL.

Who, for example?

MARSHAL.

Doctor Boni for one. He comes here constantly.

MICHAEL.

To attend on old Martha. The dear soul thinks she has sciatica. But she's as good as gold and as true as steel.

MARSHAL.

I daresay she is, but——

MICHAEL.

What ?

MARSHAL.

She's like the parrot—she talks too much.

MICHAEL.

Most of us do, Marshal. What is Doctor Boni doing ?

MARSHAL.

Keeping company with a suspicious-looking stranger who came in a fruit-cutter after you left for Lermo.

MICHAEL.

Who is this stranger ?

MARSHAL.

A big powerful fellow, born in these parts apparently, but abroad for several years.

MICHAEL.

That doesn't sound very shocking.

MARSHAL.

He spends his days indoors and his nights rambling around this house. Is always asking questions about the President and seems to have some grievance against him.

MICHAEL.

And what is your inference ?

MARSHAL.

That Doctor Boni, a friend of the banished Governor, and anxious to see him reinstated, is using the man for his own purposes.

MICHAEL.

As a spy perhaps?

MARSHAL.

Perhaps as a spy.

MICHAEL.

Something worse possibly?

MARSHAL.

Possibly something worse.

MICHAEL.

[*Laughing.*] What fellows you are—you lawyers and police—for making mountains out of mole-hills! Because Doctor Boni, a medical man, is seen in the company of a stranger who is probably ill and possibly crazy, am I to suppose that murder is stalking in my footsteps?

MARSHAL.

I have evidence.

MICHAEL.

What——?

MARSHAL.

An unbeneficed priest who has been drinking with the man and seems to have known him in former years.

MICHAEL.

Where is the priest now?

MARSHAL.

In the hall. I've had him brought to see you.

MICHAEL.

Bring him in.

[MARSHAL goes to door and calls "*Father Ferrati.*"]

MARSHAL.

[*In a lower voice.*] Seems to have been drinking since I spoke to him this morning. So much the better. His tongue will wag the faster. [*An OLD PRIEST comes in, untidy, dirty, drunk, a wreck of a man. Makes mock obeisance to MICHAEL. Humorous, a little audacious.*] You are Father Ferrati?

PRIEST.

[*Hiccough.*] Used to be.

MARSHAL.

Where do you live?

PRIEST.

[*Hiccough.*] Don't live—linger.

MARSHAL.

Tell the President what you told me this morning.

PRIEST.

[*Stupidly.*] Did I tell you something?

MARSHAL.

About the young man who lodges with you at Mammy Rosa's.

PRIEST.

[*With look of intelligence.*] Oh, yes! But I was sober then. You can't hold a man responsible for what he says when he's sober.

MARSHAL.

[*Putting his hand in his pocket.*] You know what I promised you, and if you want it now——

PRIEST.

Two bad pays, sir,—pay beforehand and [*hiccough*] no pay at all.

MARSHAL.

Come, come! Pull yourself together. Didn't you say you knew the young man when he was a boy? Knew his mother before him? That she was the daughter of an important person? That her father turned her out when she disgraced herself and gave birth to this child—this boy? That the man who had betrayed her deserted her and went away to another country where he married another woman and had another son?

MICHAEL.

[*Altering his position.*] Ah!

MARSHAL.

Didn't you say she died at last in poverty and shame—that you administered the last rites to her—that when she was dead the boy was like a madman and swore a frightful oath of vengeance against his father and his father's son?

PRIEST.

[*Speaking with drunken lisp.*] Did I say all that? Wonderful what a lot a man will say when he's sober.

MARSHAL.

And didn't you tell me that you had seen nothing of the young man after that until a week ago when he told you his father was dead, and his father's son had come to live on this island? Didn't you think he had got it into his crazy head that the President was his half-brother, and being afraid there might be bloodshed didn't you come to me——

PRIEST.

Afraid! That's it! When a man's sober he's afraid of everything. But when he's drunk he's afraid of nothing.

MARSHAL.

You shall be afraid of something if this goes much further. What's the young man's name?

PRIEST.

What's the good of asking that? If he's a bastard he's got no name, has he?

MARSHAL.

What was his mother's name, then?

PRIEST.

What's the good of asking that either? If she lost her character she lost her name—her good name, didn't she?

MARSHAL.

You'll lose your name, too, and find a number if this fooling with the President goes on one moment longer. I see what has happened. Somebody has got hold of you in the interests of the old Governor. And you've made yourself drunk and stupid so as to shield this spy, this anarchist, this assassin.

PRIEST.

[*Sobering himself.*] Made myself drunk, have I? Perhaps I have. Better be drunk and straight than sober and a sneak. Send me to the lock-up, will you? Send me! Better be there than betray my comrade. Anarchist, is he? Why not? Why aren't we all anarchists? Governors and Presidents—what's the difference between them? [*Fiercely, facing MICHAEL.*] Robbers, tyrants, murderers, vivisectors of suffering humanity, taking care of yourselves, but walking over poor devils like me when we're down—why doesn't the world wipe out the lot of you?

[*The MARSHAL with a cry of "Silence!" is making for the PRIEST when MICHAEL holds up his hand.*

MICHAEL.

[*Going up to* PRIEST, *quietly.*] Father!

PRIEST.

[*Startled.*] Sir!

MICHAEL.

Do you believe in conversion?

PRIEST.

[*Astonished.*] Yes.

MICHAEL.

That however low a man may have fallen, as long as his soul is alive there's salvation for him still——do you believe in that?

PRIEST.

I do.

MICHAEL.

So do I. [*He goes over to desk, takes up a paper, writes on it, and returns with it in his hand.*] The Bishop has taken away your cure, but you are a priest still?

PRIEST.

[*Straightening himself.*] Once a priest, always a priest.

MICHAEL.

Most of the chaplaincies in this See are in the Bishop's gift, but one is under the patronage of the President, and it happens to be vacant now.

PRIEST.

[*Amazed.*] Oh!

MICHAEL.

A little lonely island, far out in the open sea, where there is no drink and no temptation. [*The PRIEST's amazement increases.*] Only two hundred souls—chiefly poor fishermen—and a little wooden church and presbytery on the edge of a cliff, with the sea breaking on the rocks at an awesome depth below. [*The PRIEST is breathing audibly in his astonishment.*] Do you think if I were to send you there you could turn your back on the past?

PRIEST.

[*Dazed, stammering.*] I'd try.

MICHAEL.

It would be a great responsibility. I should be much criticised. And then there are those two hundred poor souls looking to the priest for counsel and comfort in life, in trouble, in the hour of death. Dare you risk it?

PRIEST.

[*With agitation.*] Only give me the chance, sir!

MICHAEL.

I will. [*Giving PRIEST the paper.*] Go home and make ready.

PRIEST.

[*Fumbling the paper, his eyes full, his throat choking.*] God bless you, sir! You are the first to have faith in



MISS HENRIETTA WATSON AS THE "HOUSEKEEPER."

me. I'll not forget it either. If a man like me can ever do anything for one like you, no matter what—if it's to the last drop of my blood—you'll know where I am; send for me, I'll be there. [*He turns to MICHAEL as if intending to go down on his knees.*] Good-bye, sir?

MICHAEL.

[*Anticipating PRIEST, kneeling and kissing his hand.*] Father!

[*The PRIEST startled and deeply moved, makes with a trembling hand the sign of blessing, then straightens himself up, throws back his head, and walks bravely out of the room. The MAID comes down staircase with tea.*

MICHAEL.

[*Loudly, excitedly.*] Marshal! Marshal! Marshal! You've solved the problem of my life. This stranger is no spy, but somebody I've been looking for during the past three years. I'll go round to Mammy Rosa's to find out for myself.

MARSHAL.

But lest you should be mistaken I beg of you to take precautions.

MICHAEL.

What precautions?

MARSHAL.

Have a police guard about your person night and day.

MICHAEL

Nonsense!

MARSHAL.

If you have no fear for yourself there is now your duty to your wife.

MICHAEL.

Very well! I'll speak to my housekeeper, and she'll put the police in the rooms below.

MARSHAL.

[*Making ready to go.*] I'll send them at once, sir.

MICHAEL.

Here's my wife—she'll want you to drink a cup of tea first.

[*GREEBA has come down stairs and taken her place at tea-table.*]

MARSHAL.

Madame will excuse me. [*To GREEBA.*] Your husband's life is precious, madame—we must not let him risk it.

MICHAEL.

Good-bye, then!

MARSHAL.

[*Going through door.*] Good-bye, sir! And if you are going to the Students' Hall to-night I'll tell the guard to bring you back.

MICHAEL.

[*Passing through door.*] Don't trouble! The boys

will see me home. [*Outside.*] Singing their students songs, you know. By-bye!

[*He returns to room humming the song sung by students going off.*]

GREEBA.

[*Pouring tea with trembling hand.*] What was the Marshal saying?

MICHAEL.

Something about a stranger who has come in a fruit-cutter. [*Drinking and laughing.*] Thinks him a spy for the Governor we upset and banished.

GREEBA.

[*Uneasily.*] How long has the stranger been here?

MICHAEL.

About ten days apparently.

GREEBA.

Who is he?

MICHAEL.

That's what I want to know. And on my way to the Students' Hall I'm going to his lodgings to find out.

GREEBA.

Must you go out to-night, Michael? It is our first night at home. Can't you spend it with me dear?

MICHAEL.

I should love to, but——

GREEBA.

We've never had a long talk yet, you know, and I have so much to tell you. About home, and what happened there during the long, cruel time when our letters were stopped, and you heard nothing.

MICHAEL.

But I promised the students——

GREEBA.

. . . about father and mother and grandfather and Christian Ann and Danny and little Mona. You will laugh—some things were so amusing. And then some were so serious, so important, you ought to hear them—you must.

MICHAEL.

If I had not given them my faithful word for it——

GREEBA.

It would be so sweet, dear. Now that the tiresome addresses and receptions are over—the first night at home—we two alone—sitting before the fire—the lamps out—me telling you everything—on your knee, perhaps——

MICHAEL.

Don't tempt me to break my word, dearest.

GREEBA.

Lay the blame on me, Michael. Say I'm ill—nervous at least.

MICHAEL.

That's it. The talk of the spy has unnerved you. But we mustn't give way to such weakness. When I come back I shall have something to say about that stranger—something surprising, delightful.

GREEBA.

You are going to find him ?

MICHAEL.

To find out something about him anyway.

GREEBA.

But if he should prove to be——

MICHAEL.

[*Laughing.*] A spy ?

GREEBA.

Somebody who is trying to do you a mischief ?

MICHAEL.

Nonsense, dear ! It's still daylight. And when I come home there will be a police guard to protect me. They are to be lodged in the house itself, so that even in the middle of the night I shall only have to stamp

on the floor and the guards will be in the room . . .
Housekeeper!

HOUSEKEEPER *is seen coming down stairs.*

MICHAEL *throwing on his coat.*

HOUSEKEEPER.

Yes, sir?

MICHAEL.

The Marshal is to send a guard of police.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Now that's just what I said to——

MICHAEL.

There'll be four of them, I suppose—put them in the room next Giovanni's.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Poor Giovanni! I've something to tell you about——

MICHAEL.

Another time. Give your mistress a nice little dinner and then go to bed. I'll let myself in with my key.

GREEBA.

[*Following him to door.*] You'll not be late?

MICHAEL.

Indeed no.

GREEBA.

Or stay to talk with any one?

MICHAEL.

[*Whispering.*] I'll hurry home to talk with you, dear. And then it will be we two alone—sitting before the fire—lamps out—you telling me everything—on my knee, you know! Darling!

[*He kisses her and goes. She comes back to desk, and begins to write letter. HOUSE-KEEPER lights lamp, makes up fire, fixes screen between desk and fire, etc.*

HOUSEKEEPER.

What time will you dine, ma'am?

GREEBA.

I won't dine at all to-night.

HOUSEKEEPER,

Not at all?

GREEBA,

I'm not hungry.

HOUSEKEEPER.

You mustn't think hard of it that the President has left you to-night. He promised the boys, and his word is his bond, you know . . . What he gives he asks too . . . I do believe if his nearest and dearest were to break faith with him he would be done with them for ever . . . He's just as faithful though—to those that are true to him . . . When that week of terror was over, and the people broke open the prison and made him President, it was midnight before the rejoicings were over, but he wouldn't go to bed until he had written to you, ma'am . . . You'll want your

letters posted, won't you? Well, you've only to touch this bell and the porter will come up for them . . . Now, I must see to the police guard. I'll have my hands full to find beds for them. So I'll say good-night, ma'am.

GREEBA.

Good-night, housekeeper!

[HOUSEKEEPER takes tray and goes up staircase. GREEBA takes up her letter and reads what she has written.]

"Everybody here is so good to me for Michael's sake. But I'm always wondering what is happening at home. How is father? And mother? And grandfather? And the children? What about Jason? Has anything been heard of him? So strange that he should disappear on the day of the Melliah, and not a word or a sign since! Where can he be, I wonder? They sing his songs in the streets here. The singing haunts me like a ghost—and——"

[The faint sound of a students' chorus comes from a distance. GREEBA rises, goes to the window and listens, trembling. The singing dies away. She puts letter into envelope, seals, and addresses it. Then touches bell. The porter's door opens. JASON steps into the room and starts at sight of GREEBA. They come face to face.]

Jason!

JASON.

Be quiet!

GREEBA.

Are you the porter in this house? What does it mean? Why are you here?

JASON.

Why are *you* here, Greeba?

GREEBA.

I did wrong to you, Jason. But you forgave me. Have you withdrawn your forgiveness, and followed me to punish me?

JASON.

No.

GREEBA.

Then what have you come for?

JASON.

To meet the man.

GREEBA

Michael?

JASON.

Yes.

GREEBA.

[*In terror.*] Jason!

JASON.

Be silent.

GREEBA.

I understand. I think I understand. I have not forgotten the night I saw you first or what you told me then. You have come with vengeance in your heart against your own brother . . . [*She looks round as if for help.*] I see it all now—why you are here as a servant in this house. You found out Michael's habits and expected to find him in this room alone. [*She looks from door to bell.*] Well, he is not here, you see.

Your plan has failed. Providence has snatched him out of your hands. He has gone out and before he can return—— [*She takes a step towards the door.*]

JASON.

Come back!

GREER.

[*Stepping.*] You are not well. You are not yourself, Jason. You don't know what you are doing. If you do not control yourself you may do something you will always regret. Some violence—some crime—— [*Again she tries to reach the door.*]

JASON.

[*More sternly.*] Come back, I say.

GREER.

[*Returning, trying to soothe him.*] Jason, you used to tell me I had done something for you—something to calm the wild passions that conquered you when the world was cruel and your heart was hurt. Let me do something now—something to soothe you—to comfort you.

JASON.

[*Pressing heavily.*] Oh!

GREER.

[*More pathetically.*] Don't you remember, Jason? "It is so sweet to be a good man among good men," you said. "When the world kicks me and spurns me again I'll think of this house, I'll remember you."

JASON.

[*Struggling with his better nature.*] Oh! Oh!

GREEBA.

[*Pleadingly.*] Jason, you loved me once. I think you love me still. If you do what you are thinking of what is to become of me? I shall never know another happy hour.

JASON.

[*With a groan.*] Oh! Oh! Oh!

[*The tramp of the POLICE GUARD is heard outside.*]

GREEBA.

I love my husband. If he should be taken from me I should die. My heart would be broken. He is everything to me. Nobody else in the world——

JASON.

[*With a cry of jealous rage.*] What are you saying?

[*He makes for the door; she intercepts him.*]

GREEBA.

[*Firmly.*] Wait! You are going to avenge yourself upon my husband for the wrong which was done to you by me; but there is something you don't know. You don't know that I can stop you—now—here—at this moment. Listen!

[*The tramp of the POLICE GUARD is heard underneath.*]

[*In a whisper.*] That's the police guard. They have come here to protect the President from some

one who is suspected of having designs upon his life. I have only to stamp my foot on this floor, and in a moment they will be in the room. You understand?

JASON.

Let me go.

GREEBA.

Don't tempt me! Don't drive me too hard. It would be an everlasting grief to me if some one who had lost control of himself merely because he loved me too dearly——

JASON.

Stand aside, Greeba!

GREEBA.

[*Again pleadingly.*] Jason, you must make peace with my husband. You must forget all you have against him—all the wrong done to you by his father, by me. And then if he comes to know why you are here, a servant in his house, he will forgive you, for he is good, he is tender-hearted, he'll forgive you everything.

JASON.

[*With a cry of mad rage.*] My curse on him and his forgiveness!

[*He makes a final effort to go. She stands with back to the door, and stretches her arms across it.*

GREEBA.

[*With flashing eyes, vehemently.*] Very well, I have done all I can. You have shown me no mercy; now

I will show none to you. My husband's life is before everything. You are following him to kill him. That's it—you know it is. But before you leave this room you will promise me to give up your wicked purpose.

JASON.

Let me pass, Greeba.

GREEBA.

Swear before God to live at peace with my husband——

JASON.

Greeba, do you hear me? Let me pass.

GREEBA.

Swear it!

JASON.

Never!

GREEBA.

Then you are mad, and must be treated as a mad-man. [*She stamps on the floor and cries.*] Help! Help! Help! Murder! Murder!

JASON runs back to Porter's door. There is the sound of the GUARD coming upstairs. He turns to the staircase leading to inner rooms. Then returns to GREEBA.

JASON.

I wouldn't hurt a hair of your head, Greeba, but I must pass through that door. Will you stand aside?

GREEBA.

No, I will not!

[*There are shouts below and on either side. JASON looks round, then turns to the window, doubles his arms over his face and dashes through the glass. GREEBA makes a cry and crosses to left. There are shouts outside, and at the next moment the folding-doors are thrown open and the POLICE GUARD comes in with JASON as a prisoner. HOUSEKEEPER and MAID, etc., appear on staircase.*

CAPTAIN OF POLICE GUARD.

Who is this man?

GREEBA.

[*In great excitement.*] That is the . . . the spy you are in search of. I charge him with being in this house to make an attempt on the life of the President.

[*JASON is handcuffed. There is a moment's silence.*

CAPTAIN OF POLICE GUARD.

Have you anything to say for yourself?

[*JASON stands as if dumbfounded, gazing vacantly around him. Looks at GREEBA, hesitates, seems about to speak, then breaks into a wild peal of mad laughter. The CAPTAIN makes a sign to his MEN, and JASON is marched out. The mad laughter continues and is heard after he is gone.*

GREEBA.

[*Staggering forward and sinking into a chair.*] Water!
Water! [HOUSEKEEPER and MAID run down to her.

HOUSEKEEPER.

Oh, dear! To think he should turn out to be a spy!

[*Enter MARSHAL.*

MARSHAL.

I've sent for the President. He will be here presently. How did the man get into the house?

HOUSEKEEPER.

He came as a porter.

MARSHAL.

Porter?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Doctor Boni recommended him.

MARSHAL.

Just as I thought!

HOUSEKEEPER.

How distressed the Doctor will be!

MARSHAL.

He certainly will when I get hold of him. I must do so at once. [*To GREEBA.*] Don't be afraid, Madame. The man can do the President no mischief. In a case like this we must exercise the powers we possess. Within half an hour the fellow will be on his way to the Sulphur Mines.

[*GREEBA falls back as if fainting. The MARSHAL goes right out.*

HOUSEKEEPER.

Madame! Madame! Water again, Maria!

[*Enter MICHAEL left.*]

MICHAEL.

[*Taking GREEBA in his arms.*] My darling!

GREEBA.

Michael!

MICHAEL.

My poor girl is quite unstrung by this ugly business. It's all my fault. The talk of the spy has frightened her. But this man is no spy, dear. Shall I tell you who he is? He is my brother—my half-brother at least—my father's son. Don't you remember why I came here—one of the reasons that brought me? It was to find him, and I've found him this very day. Such an accident too! Some jabber of a poor drunken priest. I felt sure I knew the person it pointed to, and I went round to Mammy Rosa's to see for myself. It was he—there couldn't be a doubt of it. The priest was sober by that time and he told me everything. [*To HOUSEKEEPER.*] Where's the Marshal?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Gone, sir.

MICHAEL.

[*Going to desk.*] I'll write to him. No time to lose though. In a case like this of incipient rebellion the police will think it dangerous trifling to think of judge and jury.



ACT II.
GREEBA

DANNY
(MASTER H. E. DUFF)

MONA
(MISS LAMONT)

GREEBA.

You are not going to prevent them from sending this prisoner to prison.

MICHAEL.

[*Writing rapidly.*] That's just what I *am* going to do, dear. How could I live an hour in peace and happiness if my own brother were slaving at the Sulphur Mines!

GREEBA.

But even if he is your brother he came here under false pretences and intended to take your life.

MICHAEL.

Madness, my dear! The priest told me all about it. He had taken a vow of vengeance against me. Tut! A blubber from the hot blood of these men of the sunny South-lands! [*Rising with letter.*] But we'll send for the poor fellow—have him here—in this very room—and show him we are his friends—not his enemies . . . Housekeeper!

[*He is about to hand letter to HOUSEKEEPER, when GREEBA rises and lays her hand on it.*]

GREEBA.

Michael, I beg, I pray, I entreat you not to bring Jason here.

MICHAEL.

Jason! How did you know his name was Jason?

GREEBA.

[*Overwhelmed with confusion. She steps down.*] Ah!
[MICHAEL looks after her.]

MICHAEL.

Housekeeper, leave the room for a moment. I have something to say to your mistress. [HOUSEKEEPER goes out. MICHAEL comes down to GREEBA.] Do you know this man; Greeba? . . . Ever seen him before? Ever met him anywhere?

GREEBA.

[*Hesitating.*] It is true that I know Jason. I knew him at home.

MICHAEL.

At home?

GREEBA.

You remember there was a deserter from the ship you came by.

MICHAEL.

Perfectly.

GREEBA.

That was Jason. He found his way to my father's house. He was three years there.

MICHAEL.

What did he come for?

GREEBA.

To carry out the vow of vengeance the priest spoke about.

MICHAEL.

When he found I had gone, why didn't he follow me?

GREEBA.

Because he had promised to give up his wicked purpose.

MICHAEL.

Yet after three years he comes back on the same errand?

GREEBA.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

Strange! Very strange! Had anything happened in the interval? [GREEBA is *silent*.] Greeba, has this man any claim to you, any right to you, any power over you?

GREEBA.

[*Rising and embracing him.*] Michael! My dear Michael! Let me tell you everything.

MICHAEL.

Tell me.

GREEBA.

During the long years in which we heard nothing from you there were many false and cruel rumours.

MICHAEL.

Well?

GREEBA.

They told me you were dead—that you were

married to another woman—that you had forgotten me.

MICHAEL.

Well, well?

GREEBA.

I was so hurt, so helpless. There were the insults of enemies—the importunities of friends——

MICHAEL.

And then there was Jason?

GREEBA.

Yes, there was Jason, too, so patient, so faithful——

MICHAEL.

He asked you to marry him?

GREEBA.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

And you—consented?

GREEBA.

Only for a little while. Your letter came almost immediately, and I begged him to release me, and he did. And that is the truth, the whole truth, dear, as sure as heaven is over us.

MICHAEL.

[*Disengaging himself.*] He knew you were waiting for me?

GREEBA.

Yes, and he waited too, until there seemed to be no hope of hearing from you again.

MICHAEL.

If my letter had not arrived just then you would have been married to Jason by this time?

GREEBA.

Don't say that, Michael.

MICHAEL.

At all events, he has followed you to avenge himself on me?

GREEBA.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

Then it is no longer the old feud now?

GREEBA.

No.

MICHAEL.

Yet you denounced him as a—spy?

GREEBA.

[*Startled.*] Michael!

MICHAEL.

Knowing that this man came to avenge himself on me for being deserted by you, you denounced him as a spy?

GREEBA.

That was only to save your life, dear.

MICHAEL.

Then why were you afraid to let me send for him ?

GREEBA.

[*Breathless.*] Michael, what are you thinking of ?

MICHAEL.

I am thinking you have deceived me, Greeba—that the oath you took before God to be true to me made you my wife as fast as priest or law could make you—that you have been false to that oath—false to me, and false to the man who has followed you . . .

GREEBA.

Michael !

MICHAEL.

. . . that he has come here to accuse you of your infidelity—to threaten you—to expose you to me . . .

GREEBA.

Michael !

MICHAEL.

. . . that you have closed his mouth by clapping him in prison, and that when you denounced him as a spy you were not so much protecting my life as your own secret.

GREEBA.

Do you believe that ?

MICHAEL.

Deny it, Greeba ! For God's sake deny it !

GREEBA.

[*With fire and tears in her eyes together.*] How dare you ask me to deny it ? . . . A few moments ago you wished to bring Jason here, and I begged you not to do so. Now I ask you to send for him. Bring him face to face with me. Ask him if what you say is true. Send for him ! I challenge you to send for him !

MICHAEL.

No, I will not send for him now. I hate him ! I hate him for the deception you have practised upon me ! I hate him for the treachery with which he has come between us ! Let him go to prison ! Let him live there to the last hour of his life ! Let me never look upon his face !

[*The upper door left is burst open and the HOUSEKEEPER appears in great excitement.*

HOUSEKEEPER.

President ! President ! The house is full of soldiers. Some one left the porter's door open.

MICHAEL.

[*Stamping on floor.*] Marshal ! Marshal !

[*Enter on all sides SOLDIERS, with DOCTOR BONI.*

DOCTOR.

Too late, sir! The Marshal has gone with his prisoner to the Sulphur Mines. The Governor is here.

[*Enter TESTA by porter's door.*

GOVERNOR.

[*To MICHAEL.*] The doors are locked. I arrest you for treason in the name of the King.

[*A pause. GREEBA sinks into seat down stage. The Students' Song is again heard in the street.*

MICHAEL.

May I speak to my wife, sir?

GOVERNOR.

Quickly then.

MICHAEL.

[*Coming down to GREEBA, leaning over her, and speaking in a low voice.*] You were right, Greeba. The man you denounced as a spy has been in league with my enemies. He has betrayed me, and now his friends will get rid of him also. This is what your false dealing comes to: the man you loved, but did not marry, is a prisoner; the man you married, but did not love, is a prisoner too—you have wrecked the lives of both.

GREEBA.

[*With a low moan.*] Oh! Oh!

MICHAEL.

We are man and wife, Greeba, and man and wife

we must be always. Save for that I set you free. I cannot ask you to wait for me again. I hoped the woman I married would have shared my fate for better or for worse, whatever it might be. But only love could help you to do that now, Greeba. My dream is over. The threads of our life are broken. We made a mistake—we must make the best of it. Good-bye! God help both of us!

[*He turns back to SOLDIERS. One of them gives him hat and cloak. He puts them on, takes his place in the ranks, and is marched off. TESTA goes last, looking back at GREEBA and locking the door behind him. GREEBA rises, looks round, then runs to door.*

GREEBA.

[*In a voice of passionate entreaty.*] Michael!
Michael! It isn't true. It isn't true. Michael!
Michael!

[*She pulls at door, finds it fastened, hammers at it, flings herself against it, finally falls before it. The Students' song swells up as the curtain falls.*

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE: *The Sulphur Mines on convict island off Sicily. A jagged volcanic mountainous landscape, red and black. Furnaces, sulphur kilns, shaft-heads, &c., in the foreground. Smoking mineral springs, boiling mud pools, yellow solfataras.*

When the curtain rises there is a deep subterranean roar as of thunder. A cloud of vapour obscures the sun, making it red like a bloodshot eye in a thick white fog. In the midst of this vapour the figures of MEN are seen moving about like ghosts. They are on different heights of the mountain side. The vapour gradually goes off and shows the MEN in canvas trousers, bare feet, linen shirts (bare arms), and coloured handkerchiefs bound about their heads. WARDERS in uniform, carrying rifles, are pacing by their sides. On right, down stage, there is a small hut in which two of the WARDERS are seen to be smoking and playing cards.

A gang of PRISONERS is working on the second tier up. Sounds of pickaxes and spades. Sound of a man's voice singing. It is JASON's voice singing the Students' Song.

One of the WARDERS comes to the door of hut.

WARDER.

Stop that, B25.

JASON.

All right, sir! Not supposed to sing a bit to keep my pecker up?

WARDER.

Certainly not.

JASON.

Not to speak to my pals here—my fellow prisoners?

WARDER.

You're supposed to speak to nobody except your Warder. And only to him when you are spoken to.

[WARDER goes back.]

JASON.

[*Laughing bitterly.*] Thought we were a lot of blasted ghosts flitting about in the fumes of hell.

[PRISONERS laugh. *Another subterranean roar.*]

FIRST CONVICT.

[*To JASON.*] What a hell it is, matey! Listen!

JASON.

The old prisoner in the bowels of the earth is growling again, is he?

[*A shaft of steam leaps up from solfatara in front.*]

FIRST CONVICT.

And look there!

JASON.

Spouting from another of his nostrils, eh?

FIRST CONVICT.

Pity the poor devil who has to open that pit, *I* say!

JASON.

Why so, sonny? He'll get his release for it, won't he?

FIRST CONVICT.

Bet your life he will! And not have to wait long for it either.

JASON.

[*Singing in mocking voice.*]

"Standing by the River Jor-dan,
Looking towards the heavenly la-nd."

[PRISONERS *laugh*.

WARDER.

[*Coming to door.*] Silence there!

[WARDER *goes back*.

SECOND CONVICT.

Lord, I'm tired of this place, though! Such a waste, such a chaos!

FIRST CONVICT.

Just about as far as the world was finished, *I* say.

SECOND CONVICT.

Not a tree.

FIRST CONVICT.

Not a bush.

SECOND CONVICT.

Not a bird.

JASON.

Not a sign of God Himself!

THIRD CONVICT.

[*Apparently a very old man.*] Don't say that, comrades. God is everywhere. [PRISONERS *laugh bitterly.*

JASON.

How old are you, daddy?

THIRD CONVICT.

Forty-two come Christmas.

JASON.

And how long have you been here?

THIRD CONVICT.

Twenty years this winter.

JASON.

Yet you believe that God is everywhere?

THIRD CONVICT.

I do.

JASON.

The God of mercy and love and compassion in a hell on earth like this?

THIRD CONVICT.

God is in our hearts, comrade. And He's often found where he's least suspected.

JASON.

[Singing again in mocking voice.]

"God's in His meadow, pied with daisies,
God's in His world—but it burns like blazes!"

[PRISONERS laugh.]

WARDER.

[Coming to door.] Silence, prisoners!

[WARDER goes back. Voices are heard outside.]

MICHAEL'S VOICE.

[On right.] I can't do it! I can't do it!

JASON.

Who is that?

SECOND CONVICT.

Must be the new prisoner they brought in yesterday.

FIRST CONVICT.

My eye! Wait till you see him! A regular top-sawyer, I can tell you!

SECOND CONVICT.

Used to be a swell, they say. Raves like a madman when they treat him like a dog.

JASON.

They'll soon bash that out of him, poor devil!

SECOND CONVICT.

Course they will! What does a man get for kicking against cruelty in a place like this? Only the lash and the black hole for refractory conduct.

FIRST CONVICT.

My game is to pass for humble and grateful—not riotous and rebellious—no thank you—not me! “Yes, governor, the food’s as sweet as honey, and the beds is as soft as down, and I’m having the time of my life, I am.” [PRISONERS *laugh*. WARDER *comes out*.

WARDER.

Silence!

MICHAEL.

[*Voice*.] I tell you I can’t!

CAPTAIN.

[*Voice*.] Out you go!

JASON.

Warder, what’s the name of the new prisoner?

WARDER.

D25.

JASON.

I asked for his name.

WARDER.

No names here, my man.

JASON.

Of course not. Only numbers. You may work six months by a man's side and know no more about your comrade than if you were a couple of beasts in a cattle-pen.

FIRST CONVICT.

But names aren't no advantage, matey. Not sometimes, any way. Mine got me seven years' hard, and I don't care if I never hear it again.

[PRISONERS *laugh*. *There is the sound of scuffling on right, and* MICHAEL SUNLOCKS *is pushed on behind a truck by* TWO WARDERS, *followed by the* CAPTAIN *of the Mines. The* CAPTAIN *is* DOCTOR BONI.

MICHAEL.

I protest! I am illegally imprisoned! I was condemned to penal servitude on the Island of St. Helda. Why do you bring me here!

CAPTAIN.

Hold your tongue!

MICHAEL.

I appeal to the King. If you are Captain you are required to carry my petition.

CAPTAIN.

Hold your tongue, I tell you.

JASON.

[*To* WARDER.] Is that D25?



MISS MARJORIE DAY MILKING THE COW IN ACT II.

WARDER.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

What's your motive in bringing me to this place?
Who ordered it?

CAPTAIN.

Go on with your work.

MICHAEL.

I can't.

CAPTAIN.

Push that truck.

MICHAEL.

It's impossible.

CAPTAIN.

We must see if we can't make it possible.

MICHAEL.

Do you wish to torture me?

CAPTAIN.

I wish to break you, you obstinate young villain.

[*The WARDERS threaten. MICHAEL submits,
attempts to push truck.*]

JASON.

[*To the WARDER.*] The man's ill—he's as weak as a
child.

MICHAEL.

[*Feebly.*] I'm weak after what I've gone through.
Give me three days to get up my strength, sir.

L

CAPTAIN.

Not three minutes. Go on.

JASON.

Warder, tell the Captain I'll do that man's work and my own as well. He's sick. Send him up to the hospital.

WARDER.

Silence!

MICHAEL.

[*After another attempt.*] I can't! You see I can't

CAPTAIN.

[*Raising his stick.*] Go on, I say!

JASON.

What! Strike him with a stick! And nothing in the man's hand but his fist!

[*The PRISONERS murmur audibly.*]

MICHAEL.

Then kill me! Kill me at once and put me out of my misery.

CAPTAIN.

You want to raise a rebellion, do you? But if you've done that outside you can't do it here. The tables are turned. Your day is over. Get on with your work, you whining cur!

MICHAEL.

[*Flaming up again.*] I can't and I won't! Who are you to command me? A trickster, a traitor, a sneak who comes into a man's house as a friend and turns his servants into spies.

CAPTAIN.

Insolent dog!

[*He strikes MICHAEL with his stick. At the next moment JASON leaps down and with a blow on the breast lays the CAPTAIN on his back. There is a moment of confusion. The PRISONERS and WARDERS are all shouting together when the GOVERNOR enters, attended by SOLDIERS.*

GOVERNOR.

What's this?

CAPTAIN.

[*Rising.*] Refractory conduct of two prisoners, sir. One refused to work, the other struck me.

GOVERNOR.

Which? Which?

CAPTAIN.

[*Pointing to MICHAEL.*] This one refused to work . . .

JASON.

And I struck him.

GOVERNOR.

Did you? Really? [*Looking from JASON to MICHAEL.*] Can it be possible? Well, you know

what to do with them. [*Pointing to JASON.*] Let this one be lashed.

JASON.

[*Throws open his shirt, &c.*] Lash me!

GOVERNOR.

The triangle! Immediately

CAPTAIN.

Here, sir?

GOVERNOR.

Here.

[*The triangle is brought on. JASON kicks it aside.*]

JASON.

Go on! I'll not run away.

GOVERNOR.

How brave! Do as he wants you, Warder.

[*JASON turns his back. A WARDER takes the cat.*]

MICHAEL.

No, no!

GOVERNOR.

No?

MICHAEL.

The fault is mine if it's anybody's. Let him go.

GOVERNOR.

How nice! Go on there!

MICHAEL.

Stop! You shall not do it!

GOVERNOR.

Shall we not? No? Then you shall do it for us.

MICHAEL.

I?

GOVERNOR.

Give him the cat.

MICHAEL.

Yes, give it me! Give it me!

. [*Clutching the cat he seems about to fall on the*
GOVERNOR.

JASON.

Wait!

GOVERNOR

Well?

JASON.

You can't mean it, sir?

GOVERNOR.

Why not?

JASON.

The man is ill, and this ruffian struck him with his stick. You can't mean that the prisoner I tried to protect is the one that is to flog me?

GOVERNOR.

Showing the white feather at last, are we?

JASON.

Go on! I'm ready!

GOVERNOR.

Yes, yes ! Don't keep him waiting.

MICHAEL.

If you have any bowels of compassion, think what you are asking me to do.

GOVERNOR.

Go on !

MICHAEL.

What man with a heart could do it ?

GOVERNOR.

Go on, I say !

FIRST CONVICT.

[*Creeping behind MICHAEL.*] Go on, matey ! They'll give it him worse if you don't, and serve you out too.

JASON.

Go on, comrade !

MICHAEL.

Forgive me first. Say you forgive me.

JASON.

There is nothing to forgive. Don't be afraid. Go on.

[*MICHAEL hesitates for a moment, then flings down the cat.*]

MICHAEL.

No, no, I will not go on. Let them lash me, too, if they like. Lash me !

[*Throws open his shirt, and takes his place by JASON's side.*]

GOVERNOR.

Very well! We must see what better we can do for you. The chains! [*WARDERS bring chains from hut.*] Chain them up together, leg to leg and arm to arm. [*JASON and MICHAEL are chained together.*] So you two men are fond of each other's company, are you? Well, you shall have enough of it and to spare. Day after day, and night after night, like as you now are you shall live together, until you abhor and loathe and detest the sight of each other. Now go!

[*COMPANY breaks up. GOVERNOR and CAPTAIN go to upper terrace. WARDERS drive back their PRISONERS. MICHAEL and JASON are alone for a moment.*]

MICHAEL.

You'll hate me for bringing you to this.

JASON.

It's nothing.

MICHAEL

Nothing?

JASON.

I mean, I care nothing if you do not.

MICHAEL

You don't regret it, then?

JASON.

No! And you?

MICHAEL

No! . . . What's your name, comrade?

JASON.

Call me—brother!

MICHAEL.

[*Feeling for JASON's hand by his side.*] Brother!

WARDER.

March! To your work!

[*The Two MEN take their places behind the truck, and go out left. There is another subterranean roar, followed by spouts of steam and clouds of smoke.*]

CAPTAIN.

[*To GOVERNOR.*] Those two men may be dangerous to the Government even yet, sir.

GOVERNOR.

Nonsense!

CAPTAIN.

It might have been better to liberate the one and send the other to Lonely Island.

GOVERNOR.

Why?

CAPTAIN.

The consequences you expected have not come to pass. The men are friends, not foes.

GOVERNOR.

Wait till they know each other, and we'll see what they will be. But come, show me what's going on.

The Government requires money, and the earnings of the Sulphur Mines are declining day by day.

CAPTAIN.

They're likely to decline, sir.

GOVERNOR.

Why so ?

CAPTAIN.

Something is happening here—something strange, something extraordinary.

GOVERNOR.

What is it ?

CAPTAIN.

The steam that rises from the solfataras is becoming less and less, and the sulphur is ceasing to grow.

GOVERNOR.

Any other phenomena ?

CAPTAIN.

Yes, deep subterranean noises from places where no fissures have yet been seen.

GOVERNOR.

And what is your conclusion ?

CAPTAIN.

That the life of the mines, the great infernal fire beneath the surface of the earth, is changing ground.

GOVERNOR.

Then what's simpler? Open the new solfataras and they'll stand to us in the place of the old ones.

CAPTAIN.

Impossible! I mean, it would be dangerous. Here, for instance. This is one of the worst places, and it would be death to the man who opened it.

GOVERNOR.

Well, what are your prisoners for? Boni, you are a fool! . . . Boni?

CAPTAIN.

Yes, sir.

GOVERNOR.

Nearer.

CAPTAIN.

I'm listening.

GOVERNOR.

If these two men were left alone they might talk a little.

CAPTAIN.

They might.

GOVERNOR.

They might find out who they are

CAPTAIN.

They might, indeed.

GOVERNOR.

Having done so, they might fly at each other's throats.

CAPTAIN.

They might certainly.

GOVERNOR.

If your warders were out of the way the quarrel might be serious.

CAPTAIN.

Very serious.

GOVERNOR.

It would save the Government a deal of trouble.

CAPTAIN.

A great deal of trouble.

GOVERNOR.

And you a deal of anxiety.

CAPTAIN.

A great deal of anxiety !

GOVERNOR.

Come, then !

CAPTAIN.

[*Aloud.*] Warder, this way !

[GOVERNOR and CAPTAIN go up hill. WARDER from hut follows them. There is another subterranean roar, followed by clouds of vapour. JASON and MICHAEL return, pushing a truck before them. During the following scene MICHAEL rests on the truck while JASON fills it with blocks of sulphur.]

JASON.

The warder has gone. Rest yourself. I'll do your work, brother.

MICHAEL.

You won't tell me your name, then?

JASON.

Don't ask me that, brother.

MICHAEL.

Why not?

JASON.

You might remember what I did, or tried to do, and why they sent me to this place.

MICHAEL.

Was your crime so terrible?

JASON.

It might seem so, perhaps.

MICHAEL.

You have nobody belonging to you, you say?

JASON.

Nobody at all, brother. Nobody to think twice what becomes of me, Nobody to care whether I live or die. *[He laughs bitterly.]*

MICHAEL.

After all you are luckiest to be alone, perhaps. To have ties of blood and affection is only to be the more unhappy.

JASON.

That's true.

MICHAEL.

Say you love somebody, and all your heart is full of her. You lose her, and then where are you?

JASON.

[*Pausing in his work.*] Was that your case?

MICHAEL.

Yes.

JASON.

Was she your wife?

MICHAEL.

Yes.

JASON.

She died, did she?

MICHAEL.

No! There's a loss that's worse than death, though.

JASON.

[*Eagerly.*] I know, brother. There was another man?

MICHAEL.

Yes.

JASON.

He came between you?

MICHAEL.

Yes.

JASON.

And you—you killed him, and that's why you're here?

MICHAEL.

No, thank God, no! But God keep that man and me apart.

[*Another subterranean roar. JASON goes on with his work.*]

JASON.

I scarce thought there was anything in common between you and me, but my life has been like yours in one thing, brother.

MICHAEL.

What is that?

JASON.

That another man has wrecked it. [MICHAEL looks round eagerly.] I never had but one glint of sunshine in my life, brother, and that man wiped it out for ever. Oh, it's sweet when all the rest of the world are like wolves to have some one who is as tender as a mother and as loving as a child.

MICHAEL.

[*Breathing heavily.*] And the man?

JASON.

He was rich, he had everything. I had nothing but that woman, and he took her away from me. It was cruel! I couldn't bear it. God knows I could not.

MICHAEL.

You didn't . . . ?

JASON.

No ! It wasn't my fault, though. The devil himself must have been trying to keep us apart.

MICHAEL.

[*Greatly agitated.*] Where is he now ?

JASON.

With her, of course. In happiness and freedom and wealth, while I am here, in prison and these chains.

MICHAEL.

Who—who sent you here ?

JASON.

She did ! To protect her husband she denounced me as a spy.

MICHAEL.

She—denounced you ?

JASON.

[*Laughing wildly.*] She ! As a spy, too ! But no matter ! For all that *she* has made me suffer *he* shall yet pay double. As sure as Heaven is over us, that man and I will yet stand face to face.

MICHAEL.

[*Staggering backward.*] Oh !

JASON.

[*Supporting him.*] Brother, are you ill!

MICHAEL.

No, no!

JASON.

The heat and the vapour . . .

MICHAEL.

It isn't that.

JASON.

Then what's the matter?

MICHAEL.

It's nothing.

JASON.

But your voice trembles.

MICHAEL.

I'm better now.

[*The GOVERNOR, CAPTAIN, &c., return.*]

CAPTAIN.

Skulking again!

JASON.

This man is sick. Send for the doctor.

CAPTAIN.

Go on with your work.

JASON.

No, I will not go on until you send this man to the hospital.



ACT III. SCENE II.
JASON (MR. FRANK COOPER) RESCUES MICHAEL (MR. AINLEY)
FROM THE SULPHUR MINES.

CAPTAIN.

[*To GOVERNOR.*] You see !

GOVERNOR.

If one rebels, punish both. Let them open this new solfatara.

CAPTAIN.

Good ! [*Calling.*] Spades, picks, bores—quickly !

[*WARDERS bring them and drive them into the ground about the solfatara.*]

MICHAEL.

[*To JASON.*] It will be best to obey—best for both of us.

CAPTAIN.

Are you ready ?

JASON.

It isn't safe.

CAPTAIN

March !

JASON.

We shall be burned and boiled alive.

CAPTAIN.

Begin !

JASON.

Do you want to drive two living men to their deaths ?

CAPTAIN.

In with you.

MICHAEL.

Come, brother.

JASON.

Listen to me, sir. If we are to open this pit of fire and brimstone, at least let us be free of these chains. That's only fair, that each man may have a chance of his life.

CAPTAIN.

Go on.

JASON.

I'm strong. I can look after myself. And I don't care much what may happen to me. But my comrade is weak and ill, and if he's to come out of that hole alive . . .

GOVERNOR.

How you men love each other! Will your love last, I wonder? [WARDERS and SOLDIERS laugh.]

JASON.

Old man, I don't know who you are or where you come from. You may be the Governor in these mines, but I appeal to your master. I appeal to the President.

GOVERNOR.

So you don't know yet? Your friend, your yoke-fellow, hasn't told you what has become of him? Well, you shall open this solfatara first and appeal to the President afterwards.

MICHAEL.

For God's sake come, comrade, come!

JASON.

Then listen again and mark my words, sir. We'll do as you command us. We'll open this pit of hell. But if anything happens to the man by my side, and I am alive to see it, as sure as there's blood in my body and strength in my limbs . . .

GOVERNOR.

You threaten me? Warders! Soldiers!

[WARDERS gather round, and SOLDIERS raise their muskets.]

JASON.

Come, then, let's make an end of it.

[JASON takes a bore and plunges it into the earth. There is a loud cry, a blinding flash, a low rumble of unearthly noises, and a cloud of smoke that obscures everything. GOVERNOR, CAPTAIN, WARDERS, and SOLDIERS fall back in terror. JASON is seen coming through the flame and smoke with the insensible body of MICHAEL in his arms. The chains that bound the men are broken.]

JASON.

[Laying MICHAEL at his feet.] Brutes, barbarians! Look what you've done! But why do I talk to you? Where's your master? You are only his miserable slaves to carry out his accursed will. Where is your President? Where is your Michael Sunlocks?

GOVERNOR.

Shall I tell you where he is? There—there, at your feet! [JASON *reels backwards.*] Yes, fool that you are and have been—that is where your Michael Sunlocks is, and you've been taking his part to your own confusion!

JASON.

God!

[*There is silence for a moment. Then a loud clap as of thunder. The CONVICTS come rushing down with affrighted faces.*]

FIRST CONVICT.

Torrents of boiling water are coming down the mountain. Fly! [Runs off.]

SECOND CONVICT.

The lava is flowing! Fly! [Runs off.]

FOURTH CONVICT.

The black sand is falling! Fly! Fly!

[*Runs off. The air darkens. Red and blue flames break out from pits on every side. The crater on the top of the highest mountain is belching fire.*]

GOVERNOR.

Captain, set your prisoners at liberty. We can recapture as many as we want when the eruption is over.

CAPTAIN.

[*Shouting.*] Fly, men! Fly! Save yourselves.
[*Pointing to MICHAEL.*] What about this one?

GOVERNOR.

Leave him alone. There's death in his face. If he recovers we can send him to St. Helda.

[GOVERNOR and CAPTAIN *disappear in the darkness.* CONVICTS *are seen rushing about in confusion, SOME laughing, SOME weeping, SOME shrieking, ALL wild with frenzy and mad with terror.*

THIRD CONVICT.

[*To JASON, running from right to left.*] Come, comrade! It is every man for himself, and God for us all now. Come!

[*The tumult dies down, the air clears, and MICHAEL is seen lying on the same spot, with JASON standing over him.*

MICHAEL.

[*Recovering consciousness.*] Water! Water!

[JASON *hesitates a moment, then goes to hut, brings water and puts it to MICHAEL's mouth.*

JASON.

Come, boy, drink, drink!

MICHAEL.

[*After drinking.*] Where am I?

JASON.

You are safe. Don't be afraid.

MICHAEL.

[*Brushing his hands over his eyes.*] Is it night?

JASON.

Only a sandstorm. It will pass away.

MICHAEL.

Then I am blind, blind, blind!

JASON.

Blind? Don't say that. The steam and the flames have scorched you. Your sight will come back presently.

MICHAEL.

Was it an eruption?

JASON.

Yes, but it is nearly over.

MICHAEL.

Are they gone?

JASON.

Cowards and tyrants, yes, they've gone and left us.

MICHAEL.

Nobody here except ourselves!

JASON.

Nobody. But so much the better—we'll get away the easier.

MICHAEL.

You are Jason, are you not?

JASON.

I am; but let us lose no time.

MICHAEL.

Do you know who I am?

JASON.

I know now; but come, let us go.

MICHAEL.

You stayed behind to save me when everybody else had left me to perish?

JASON.

We'll talk of that by-and-by, brother.

MICHAEL.

Leave me! Leave me!

JASON.

Who no? We are brothers still, are we not?

MICHAEL.

Brothers now more than ever. Give me your hand before my heart burns. [*Kissing it.*] I thank you, I love you!

JASON.

Then let us reach the coast and escape from the country. Life is sweet and there's life left for both of us. Only to live! Only to live! Now that we know each other at last, and all the cruel thoughts are over.

MICHAEL.

[*Trying to rise.*] Help me up, Jason.

JASON.

[*Helping him.*] You are weak still. I can carry you.

MICHAEL.

No, no! Let me hold your hand. That will be enough.

JASON.

Lean on my shoulder, and wind your arm about my neck, then. Come, now!

MICHAEL.

[*After a step or two.*] I cannot! Let me go. I am only a burden to you. Escape while there's time, or you'll be captured and brought back. Save yourself!

JASON.

And leave you here to die?

MICHAEL.

But I am blind and sick and have a broken heart and a broken brain, and am not worth saving.

JASON.

Courage, brother! I know a farm not far away, and the good man who keeps it. He'll give us milk and bread, and we'll sleep in his house to-night and reach the coast in the morning. Bravely, now! Bravely!

[MICHAEL tries to walk but stumbles and falls back. JASON lifts him in his arms, and puts him across his breast and shoulder. The air has cleared and a shaft of sunlight shines on MICHAEL'S upturned face as JASON carries him up and out.]

THE FIFTH ACT

SCENE : *Presbytery of the church on "Lonely Island."*
Simple Gothic chamber annexed to church. Window and fire (burning), on left. Short staircase on right leading to bedroom. Door on right down stage leading to another bedroom. Outer door at back. Doors up stage right and left to kitchen and to church. Bell-rope of church visible. Table, two chairs, fixed settee, bookcase, etc. Window on left down stage, standing open as a door.

When curtain rises it is evening. Service in church just finished. Voluntary, "The Silver Trumpets," being played on organ. A little MAID, fourteen years of age, laying supper for two. A WOMAN, in homely dress, comes from kitchen with flowers in one hand and newspapers (in postal wrappers) in the other. It is GREEBA. She lays the flowers on right side of table, and newspapers on left; then closes the window-door.

PRIEST comes from church in cassock and biretta. Some of the congregation follow, shake or kiss his hand, and pass out by outer door. It is FATHER FERRATI, now an altered man.

The Voluntary ends and the FATHER begins to

open newspapers. MICHAEL comes from church. He walks with the uncertain step of a blind man. GREEBA signals to the MAID to go to him. The MAID leads MICHAEL to the table. GREEBA goes noiselessly into room on right.

MICHAEL.

Thank you, my child ! [*Taking up flowers.*] More flowers, Father.

PRIEST.

Our good housekeeper again, President.

MICHAEL.

How kind she is ! Bringing the sunlight into my darkened room !

PRIEST.

The mail came while we were in church, President.

MICHAEL.

[*Eating.*] Any letters for me ?

PRIEST.

Not this time, sir.

MICHAEL.

They've forgotten us on this God-forsaken island, Father.

PRIEST.

Lots of newspapers, though, and plenty of news, too. Helloa ! "Insular Dependency rising against its Governor." That bull-dog at the capital is getting into hot water again, sir. Listen !

MICHAEL.

Wait!

[A bell rings in the distance.]

PRIEST.

Only the signal from the ship. The housekeeper will answer it.

MICHAEL.

Hush!

[GREEBA comes back noiselessly, goes to bell-rope and pulls. Bell rings overhead. MICHAEL seems to listen for her footsteps. She passes out by upper door right.]

PRIEST.

I told you so. She never forgets anything. When she came here first I gave her an account of all her duties. "Twice a day," I said, "a bell will ring on the man-of-war lying at anchor outside. That's as much as to say, 'Is all well with your prisoner?'" Then we ring our church bell in reply, as much as to answer, 'He's well! He's here! He's safe!'"

MICHAEL.

Is she still in the room?

PRIEST.

No, she has gone. And now we can go on with our newspapers. What's this?

MICHAEL.

Well?

PRIEST.

[*Reading.*] "In Ustica the populace are clamouring for their former President, but nobody seems to know for certain what has become of him."

MICHAEL.

Ah!

PRIEST.

[*Reading.*] "Rumour has it that after being rescued by a fellow prisoner from the eruption at the Sulphur Mines, he was captured again and spirited away to Lonely Island." There! What did I say? "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea . . ."

MICHAEL

Anything else, Father?

PRIEST.

[*Reading.*] "The people are resolved to restore him, and a determined effort is being made by the students to secure his immediate return."

MICHAEL.

They'd better leave things alone, poor boys. If the old Governor sees reason to fear that I am likely to be used as a firebrand, it will only be the worse for all of us. Any other news, father?

PRIEST.

[*Turning the newspapers.*] "Prisoners deported without trial—professors, public people——"

MICHAEL.

[*In a whisper.*] Anything about—about her?

PRIEST.

No—let me see—no! She must have gone back to her own country.

MICHAEL.

God grant she has!

PRIEST.

Women like that take care of their own comfort.

[*GREEBA is seen returning with fruit.*]

MICHAEL.

I brought her away. I shall never have a night's rest until I know she's safely back again.

PRIEST.

She's at home. Make yourself easy about that, President.

[*GREEBA signals to MAID, who takes fruit, then goes out again.*]

MICHAEL.

Anything about Jason?

PRIEST.

[*Looking through newspapers.*] Nothing! He must have escaped.

MICHAEL.

God bless him wherever he is!

PRIEST.

Yes, God bless and keep him!

MICHAEL.

It wasn't his fault that he saved me out of that hell of the elements for a life that is worse than death.

PRIEST.

Don't say that, sir.

MICHAEL.

Blind, helpless, a burden to everybody . . .

PRIEST.

No, no!

MICHAEL.

Forgive me! After all, I've much to be thankful for.

PRIEST.

We all have, Mr. President.

MICHAEL.

I'm your prisoner, yet you treat me as your friend.

PRIEST.

Should think I do, indeed!

MICHAEL.

We're alone on this desolate island, yet we have our cheerful hours together.

PRIEST.

Haven't we? The nice long nights! Nobody to disturb us, you know.

MICHAEL.

We have everything we want, too.

PRIEST.

[*Rubbing his hands.*] Yes, plenty to eat, plenty to drink . . . Well . . .

MICHAEL.

And if it wasn't for this blindness . . .

PRIEST.

Don't be downhearted, sir. As long as these old eyes of mine are to me they shall see for both of us. And then there's our housekeeper . . .

MICHAEL.

Yes, indeed.

PRIEST.

She might have been living with a blind man all her life, sir.

MICHAEL.

So thoughtful, so quiet, so noiseless!

PRIEST.

If you want your hat it's to your hand; your stick, it's there.



ACT, III. SCENE I.

GREEBA.

(MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL)

JASON.

(MR. FRANK COOPER)



MICHAEL.

Do you know, I've never yet heard her voice, Father?

PRIEST.

[*Laughing.*] Ah! you've to thank me for that, though.

MICHAEL.

You?

PRIEST.

"I've a friend living with me, and he's blind," I said, "and he doesn't want to have women about him now, because a woman did him a great wrong, and he cannot forgive any of them . . ."

[*GREEBA is seen coming back with lamp. She stops.*]

MICHAEL.

You never said that, Father?

PRIEST.

Well, it popped out, President.

MICHAEL.

And what did she say?

PRIEST.

"He shall never know there's a woman in the house unless you tell him yourself," she said.

MICHAEL.

What is she like to look upon? Tall?

PRIEST.

Well, not too tall. Just tall enough.

MICHAEL.

Dark ?

PRIEST.

Not too dark. Just dark enough too, sir.

MICHAEL.

Lost her husband, you said ?

PRIEST.

Yes, that was why she came here—to get as far away from the world as possible, and forget everything that reminded of the past.

MICHAEL.

Ah ! if God had given me a woman like that—so sweet, so true, so faithful . . .

PRIEST.

Wish you could see her for yourself, President.

MICHAEL,

[*Rising.*] Father !

PRIEST.

Yes ?

MICHAEL.

I thought I saw something this afternoon.

PRIEST.

Where? What was it?

MICHAEL.

On the cliff—when I was out walking. I thought I saw the warship anchored in the bay. Only a dream, perhaps—a cruel dream!

PRIEST.

[*Rising.*] Who knows? I've always said your sight would come back to you. Let me look again. [*Seeing GREEBA.*] Ah, housekeeper, bring up the light.

[*GREEBA, visibly agitated, holds the lamp in front of MICHAEL.*

MICHAEL.

Well?

PRIEST.

Steady, my good woman, steady, or your lamp will fall into the President's face.

MICHAEL.

Well? Well?

PRIEST.

[*Looking into MICHAEL's eyes.*] Yes! The cataract is going. There can't be a doubt of it.

GREEBA.

[*Aside.*] Thank God!

MICHAEL.

Make sure, Father. Quite sure.

PRIEST.

Wait then! [*Aside.*] Housekeeper, stand here. Hold your lamp so. [*He places MICHAEL and GREEBA face to face.*] Now, sir, what do you see?

MICHAEL.

I see a light.

PRIEST.

Good! Anything else?

MICHAEL.

The figure of some one.

PRIEST.

Good again! Is it a man or a woman?

MICHAEL.

I think it is a woman.

PRIEST.

Splendid! Take time. Look steadily. Do you see her face?

MICHAEL.

[*After a pause.*] No, there is a cloud between us.

GREEBA.

[*With mingled pain and relief.*] Ah!

PRIEST.

But the cloud will disappear some day. It may require an operation, though.

MICHAEL.

Then that is the end of everything. What operation is possible—here on this island with me a prisoner?

[*He sinks into seat. GREEBA puts lamp on table.*]

PRIEST.

Don't lose heart, sir. Nobody knows what may happen. [*Voices outside cry "Helloa! Helloa!"*] Who's that?

MAID.

[*Who has been drawing blinds, looks out of window.*] The officers from the warship, sir!

[*GREEBA goes hurriedly into room on right as the outer door is burst open and three, bright, hearty NAVAL OFFICERS come dashing into the house.*]

FIRST OFFICER.

Helloa!

SECOND OFFICER.

[*Pointing to GREEBA's retreating figure.*] Gone again!

THIRD OFFICER.

Can't catch a glimpse of the Father's pretty petticoat!

PRIEST.

You're merry this evening, gentlemen.

FIRST OFFICER.

Should think we are—we're going home!

PRIEST.

Going home ?

SECOND OFFICER.

Yes, the steamer that brought the mails brought an order for our recall.

THIRD OFFICER.

Brought the new crew too, so the old one is going back with her.

FIRST OFFICER.

We couldn't go without saying good-bye to the Father, though ; so we've come ashore to drink a glass of wine with him.

PRIEST.

But there isn't a bottle in the house, my son.

SECOND OFFICER.

[*Laughing.*] Drunk it all, have you ?

PRIEST.

I drank the last six months ago, my sons, and there hasn't been a drop under my roof-tree since.

THIRD OFFICER.

[*Producing bottle.*] Never mind ! We've brought a little along with us, and if you'll only lend us a glass or two . . .

PRIEST.

[*Calling.*] Three glasses, Natalina !

[*Little maid brings up glasses.*]

FIRST OFFICER.

[*To MICHAEL.*] You'll drink a toast with us, sir?

MICHAEL.

[*Shaking his head.*] Excuse me.

PRIEST.

Excuse me too, my sons. I did all my drinking before I came here, so I've got right through with it.

SECOND OFFICER.

But just for the last time, Father. . . .

PRIEST.

No! There are three sorts of drinkers, my sons: those who can stop and drink; those who can drink and stop, and those who can't stop drinking. I'm one of the last, and when you meet a man of my sort, take my advice, don't stop to drink with him.

THIRD OFFICER.

Here goes then—the folks at home!

[*The sailors drink and put bottle on table.*]

PRIEST.

You'll be glad to get back to them, my sons?

FIRST OFFICER.

Glad isn't the word for it, Father. When a man has been six months a grass-widower, he'd give something to hear the rustle of his wife's petticoat.

SECOND OFFICER.

I don't mind saying I'm crazy to see the kiddies. I've one of both sorts, Father. Little Rick was born at this season of the year. I expect to be home for his birthday.

THIRD OFFICER.

Well, I have no children, and no wife of my own exactly. [*Cries of "Oh! Oh!"*] I don't think it proper. [*"Oh! Oh!"*] What are women sent into the world for? For men to love them all, from the tops of their heads to the soles of their feet, the darlings, and to pick out one in particular . . . [*"Oh! Oh! Oh!"*]

FIRST OFFICER.

Well, if there were no women in the world I wouldn't give much to live in it. On the other hand, here's this dreary old island—it's a pretty desolate place—but even if I had to live here all my life and had the right woman with me—the *right* one, remember. . . . What do you say, Father?

PRIEST.

Hush!

[*He points over his shoulder to MICHAEL, who has risen and is going out of room by door to church. All silent in a moment.*]

OFFICERS.

Ah!

FIRST OFFICER.

[*In a low tone.*] What a beastly selfish brute a man can be when his heart is glad!

SECOND OFFICER.

Well, we've done our best to make things light for him. Hope the new crew will do no worse.

THIRD OFFICER.

Hardly likely, though. Our recall means something. The old Governor has grown suspicious of all his servants. I heard some talk about new regulations.

PRIEST.

What sort of regulations?

THIRD OFFICER.

God knows? To keep him under lock and key in a room like a cell, perhaps.

[The organ is heard playing "Home Sweet Home."]

FIRST OFFICER.

Who's playing?

PRIEST.

He is.

[All listen, much moved.]

THIRD OFFICER.

Poor chap! No going home for him, anyway.

SECOND OFFICER.

'Bout ship, boys—we must be getting aboard.

FIRST OFFICER.

Good night, Father!

PRIEST.

I'll walk down to the jetty and see the last of you my sons. My coat and hat, Natalina!

THIRD OFFICER.

[*Opening door.*] Dark night to-night, Father!

PRIEST.

Leave the door open, my child. The light will show me the way home.

[*THEY go off, talking. The MAID goes into kitchen. GREEBA comes out of room right and leans over fire, listening with obvious emotion to playing within. During the following scene the organ continues to play, very softly, various airs. After a moment a MAN appears at the open door. It is JASON. He wears a ragged cloak and battered hat, and has a look of devil-may-care untidiness and neglect. Plays all subsequent scenes as if under deep emotion, which he tries to carry off by a light manner. Seeing GREEBA he stops, takes off hat and cloak, then calls to her in a whisper.*

JASON.

Greeba!

GREEBA

[*With a faint cry, almost falling.*] Jason!

JASON

Hush! Don't make a noise. I've something to tell you—you first.

GREEBA.

Did you know I was here?

JASON.

I knew you must be.

GREEBA.

Where have you come from?

JASON.

From the capital.

GREEBA.

How?

JASON

By the mail steamer just arrived

GREEBA.

What has happened? What is going to happen?

JASON.

Nothing! Don't be afraid

GREEBA.

I'm not afraid. You wouldn't injure me—I know that quite well. And as for Michael, I've heard of your reconciliation—all the terrible and beautiful story. But what have you come for?

JASON.

To save your husband.

GREEBA.

Save him ?

JASON.

Help him to escape.

GREEBA.

Would to God you could ! Especially now, when his sight is coming back to him. But you can't. It's impossible.

JASON.

Why so ?

GREEBA.

There's a warship outside to keep him here.

JASON.

And an English steamer to carry him away. Listen !

GREEBA.

Yes ?

JASON.

I have taken two berths for the passage home.

GREEBA.

Home ?

JASON.

Back to England. I told the mate the other was for my wife, who had been out here nursing an invalid.

GREEBA.

Well ?

JASON.

They'll just do for you and Michael.

GREEBA.

But, Jason——

JASON.

You'll go aboard at midnight. It's dark. The mate will never know the difference.

GREEBA.

But think—only think——

JASON.

You'll keep your cabin until the steamer clears the coast. Then you may go on deck, and you'll be as safe on an English ship as if you were on the English shore.

GREEBA.

You think it can be done?

JASON.

I'm sure it can.

GREEBA.

When do you propose to make the attempt?

JASON.

To-night—the steamer sails in the morning.

GREEBA.

[*Going up.*] I'll risk it! If only for the sake of his sight, that he may have a chance of recovering it,

and all the noble gifts that are wrecked and wasted.
[*Pausing.*] But, Jason!

JASON.

Well?

GREEBA.

You'll not betray me?

JASON.

Betray you?

GREEBA.

To Michael I mean, for though I'm here he doesn't know me.

JASON.

Doesn't know you?

GREEBA.

He thinks I'm the old priest's housekeeper.

JASON.

And the priest himself?

GREEBA.

The dear, simple old soul! I had to deceive him also.

JASON.

But why?

GREEBA.

Michael has never forgiven me for what happened at home, Jason.

JASON.

I understand.

GREEBA.

He thinks I married the President, not the man.

JASON.

Yet you followed the prisoner to his lonely home
in the open sea?

GREEBA.

His home was my home, and where he was there I
had to be.

JASON.

How long have you been here?

GREEBA.

Almost ever since Michael came.

JASON.

And you've never once spoken to him.

GREEBA.

Never.

JASON.

You've waited for the day and the hour when you
might reveal yourself to him?

GREEBA.

Yes, for the day and the hour when his heart would
come back to me—when I might look into his poor
blind eyes and say, "Michael, I'm here! I'm with
you! You thought the woman you loved, the woman
you married, ought to share your fate, whatever it

might be. Haven't I done so, dearest? Haven't I proved my love for you?"

JASON.

[*Aside.*] My God! how she loves him. [*Aloud.*] He has a chance of recovering his sight, you say?

GREEBA.

So the Father thinks. But it will require an operation.

JASON.

An operation?

GREEBA.

There was no hope of that an hour ago, but now——

JASON.

Where was the Father going to when I passed him on the path?

GREEBA.

To the harbour with the officers.

JASON.

[*Pointing to where the music comes from.*] And Michael is——?

GREEBA.

In the church, playing.

JASON.

[*Taking her hand to lead her up.*] Greeba, say nothing to anybody, and if anybody questions you, answer as little as you may.



MR. AUSTIN MELFORD AS "FATHER FERRATI."

GREEBA.

Yes, yes.

JASON.

Whatever I do, or pretend to do, speak not a word, change not a feature. Do you promise me?

GREEBA.

Indeed I do. But how selfish I am! What is to become of you, Jason?

JASON.

[*Laughing.*] Of me? That's all right. You don't suppose I'm going to live the rest of my life on this drizzly old rock, do you?

GREEBA.

Where have you been living since you left the Sulphur Mines?

JASON.

[*Laughing.*] Here—there—anywhere—nowhere.

GREEBA.

What have you been doing?

JASON.

[*Laughing again.*] Drinking—gaming—going to the devil.

GREEBA.

Jason, I wronged you, and you are heaping coals of fire on my head.

JASON.

Not a bit of it. I was a fool, and made myself think I cared for you. That's all over now, Greeba.

GREEBA.

My husband was everything to me, Jason.

JASON.

Of course he was !

GREEBA.

But another woman might have loved you and made you happy.

JASON.

Ay, ay, another woman !

GREEBA.

Somewhere or other she waits for you yet—depend on that, Jason.

JASON.

Ay, somewhere or other !

GREEBA.

So don't lose heart, dear.

JASON.

[*Laughing.*] I don't ! Not I, Greeba ! Somewhere or other—that's the way of it ! [*Looking out.*] But look, the priest is coming back. Go and make ready.

[GREEBA goes in by kitchen door. JASON returns to table.]

JASON.

[*Straightening himself up and beating his breast.*]
You're in for it now, Jason! Wish I could find something to make my tongue wag. [*Looking at bottle left on table.*] Wine? Good! [*Drinking.*]
Liquor, you old father of lies, I drink down your devils to help me.

[*PRIEST enters, sees JASON and runs to him with both hands out.*]

PRIEST.

Yes—no—can it be possible? My boy! My boy!

JASON.

You've not forgotten me?

PRIEST.

As if I could forget the son of your poor mother!
And even if I could, I have some one here to remind me.

JASON.

He speaks of me sometimes, then?

PRIEST.

Every day, always—wondering what has become of you.

JASON.

God bless him!

PRIEST.

You've been away, Jason?

JASON.

Not I, Father.

PRIEST.

At home all the time and not afraid of arrest?

JASON.

[*Laughing.*] When a man has fallen into the water he needn't mind the rain. Besides, I've done their dirty work—they've no more use for me.

PRIEST.

[*Taking a step towards church.*] Let me call him. He'll want to hear everything.

JASON.

[*Stopping him.*] Not yet . . . He's still blind, I hear.

PRIEST.

Ah, yes, that cruel shaft from the solfataras—

[*The organ stops.*]

JASON.

He suffers from his blindness?

PRIEST.

Terribly, pitifully; it darkens his very soul.

JASON.

Yet your housekeeper says his sight may return to him.

PRIEST.

It would, too, if he could undergo an operation.

JASON.

Father, there's a great doctor come to Palermo. He cures ailments of all sorts, but blindness most of all. People are flocking to him from every quarter.

PRIEST.

Ah, if your poor brother could go also!

JASON.

Why can't he?

PRIEST.

My good lad, what are you thinking of?

JASON.

It wouldn't be for long. Only a month—less—much less.

PRIEST.

Impossible! Quite impossible!

JASON.

Don't say that, Father. Think—only think. All the world is dark to him. If he could see the sun and the flowers everything would be different. His exile would be nothing to him then. Let him go to the great doctor, and heaven will bless you.

PRIEST.

How can I? Twice a day a bell is rung on the ship outside to ask if the prisoner is here, and twice a day we ring the church bell in reply. It cannot be done. There is no way.

JASON.

Leave it to me, and I'll find a way.

PRIEST.

I must not—I dare not. I'm his jailer, God forgive me, and it is more than my place is worth.

JASON.

He will come back.

PRIEST.

How can you say that? Once free of this place, where the very sea imprisons him, what man in the world would come back to it?

JASON.

He will—I know he will—I swear he will.

PRIEST.

No, no! It isn't in nature, my good lad. And then think of me——

JASON.

I do think of you, and to show you how sure I am that he will come back, I will make you an offer.

PRIEST.

What——?

JASON.

To stand as your bondman while he is away.

PRIEST.

[*After a pause.*] Do you know what you are saying, Jason?

JASON.

Yes, your reverence, for I came to say it.

PRIEST.

Do you know that a new crew has come out, bringing fresh regulations? A thief suspects theft, and a tyrant treachery. In his terror the Governor may have ordered that your brother should be kept under lock and key for the rest of his natural life.

JASON.

What of that? Does the new crew know your prisoner from any other man?

PRIEST.

How can they?

JASON.

Then where is your risk if I take my brother's place?

PRIEST.

[*Catching his breath.*] My risk? Mine? I was thinking of yours! My lad, you make me ashamed.

What did I promise him when he took me up and made a new man of me? "If ever a man like me can do anything for one like you, if it's to the last drop of my blood——." I'll do it! If you dare risk your liberty I dare risk my living, and I'll do it, I'll do it!

JASON.

God bless you!

PRIEST.

Now let me call him. You shall explain your plan—how it's to be done and——

JASON.

Wait! It isn't fair that you should be allowed to go farther.

PRIEST.

As you please.

JASON.

When does the ship make her next signal?

PRIEST.

At sunrise in the morning.

JASON.

And you answer it immediately?

PRIEST.

Immediately.

JASON.

Night is the same as day to a blind man, but if he has to go down to the harbour, somebody must guide him.

PRIEST.

That's so.

JASON.

Since you are impossible, and I must stay here, perhaps your housekeeper may go with him ?

PRIEST.

Why not ?

JASON.

You can trust me, your reverence ?

PRIEST

I can.

JASON

You believe I will keep to my bargain ?

PRIEST

I do.

JASON.

Then go to your room, and lie snug in your bed until you hear the ship's bell in the morning.

PRIEST.

I will ! [PRIEST goes towards his room. MICHAEL seen coming from church.] Ah, Jason, Jason ! to think you are doing this for him—you who swore that oath of vengeance !

JASON,

[*Drinking.*] Ay, ay, life's a fine lottery, isn't it ?

PRIEST.

How the good God tears our poor passions to tatters! "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord. I will repay."

JASON.

Yes, God knows best what is best, doesn't He?

MICHAEL.

[*In an agitated voice.*] Father, there is somebody with you. Who is it?

JASON.

A friend.

MICHAEL.

Whose voice is that?

PRIEST.

Don't you know it, President?

MICHAEL.

Jason! Where are you? Let me touch you.

[*They fall into each other's arms, laughing and weeping like children.*]

PRIEST.

[*Wiping his eyes.*] I leave you together—you don't want me. I'll go to bed. An old man has to go to bed early, you know. [*Calling.*] Housekeeper! [*GREEBA comes from back.*] Shake down a bed for the stranger in the church. Good night, Jason! You'll

sleep in the odour of sanctity for once. Do you good, you young pagan. See you in the morning. Good night, President!

[Both answer, PRIEST goes upstairs and out.]

MICHAEL and JASON sit, one on chair the other on table, with hands clasped. GREEBA stands a moment watching them.

JASON.

Michael, I've brought you a message.

MICHAEL.

Where from?

JASON.

From home.

MICHAEL.

So you've been there since they arrested me?

JASON.

Should rather think I have! *[Aside.]* What a liar you are, Jason!

MICHAEL.

[Sadly.] It will be harvest time in the island now. How sweet the old farm must look!

JASON.

Beautiful! The yellow corn and the red poppies, and the gorse and the fuchsia! And then the smell of the peat, and the nuts, you know!

MICHAEL.

What I would give to see it again! And the good people themselves, Jason?

JASON.

Sailing with the wind still—the grandfather, and Mrs. Fairbrother, and Christian Ann, and those two galley growlers, John James and John Robert.

MICHAEL.

How is Adam?

JASON.

Going westward, perhaps, but a good piece of daylight at the old saint yet.

MICHAEL.

And the children?

JASON.

The little 'uns are splendid. Danny's as red as a sea rover, and Mona's always nursing the doll you sent her. [*Mimicking child's voice.*] "You cry, I kiss you, you not cry no more!" A little woman though, all girlish blood and beauty, with that voice that's like joybells in a man's ear.

MICHAEL.

And—and Greeba? Is she at home? What has become of her?

JASON.

That's what I've come to tell you.

MICHAEL.

Did you say you had brought me a message?

JASON.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

Not from her?

JASON.

From her.

MICHAEL.

[*Rising.*] I cannot bear it. She broke faith with me—bitterly and cruelly broke faith with me and betrayed me. [GREEBEBA goes staggering out at back.]

JASON.

That may be so, Michael, but who can be hard on the penitent and the dying?

MICHAEL.

Did you say—the dying?

JASON.

The troubles of these last days have broken her down. She is not like the same woman.

MICHAEL.

Poor thing!

JASON.

She is calling on you night and day. "Michael," she cries, "if I did wrong, can't you forgive me?"

MICHAEL,

Poor girl! My poor wife!

JASON.

She knows you are here, and she wants to come and nurse you. "His home is my home," she says, "and where he is there I ought to be."

MICHAEL.

Does she say that, Jason?

JASON.

She does. But it's impossible; and in her pain and trouble she cries, "Come to me, my husband! Come to me!"

MICHAEL.

Now this is the hardest lot of all! Oh, these blind eyes, this cruel rock, this imprisoning sea!

[He drops his head on the table and sobs]

JASON.

[Rising, to himself.] Jason, you are the biggest liar the Lord ever made. But you can't help it!

MICHAEL.

Oh, for one day of freedom! One day of sight! One little day!

JASON.

[On right.] Hush, Michael! You can have the day you wish for, and if you cannot see there are

others to lead you. It's all arranged. You leave this house to-night.

MICHAEL.

Jason!

JASON.

You are to sail by the steamer that leaves at day break.

MICHAEL.

But the priest——

JASON.

He'll let you go for this purpose, if you promise to return within a month.

MICHAEL.

The good old soul! Let me thank him——

JASON.

No, no! He knows everything and is content. No time to lose now. As soon as you're ready the house-keeper will lead you to the harbour.

[GREEKA is seen coming back, dressed for the journey.]

MICHAEL.

But why not you, Jason?

JASON.

Because I am to stay here until you come back.

MICHAEL.

You are to stay here?

JASON.

That is so.

MICHAEL.

As bondman instead of me?

JASON.

Why not?

MICHAEL.

To take my place and to stand for me, whatever happens?

JASON.

Certainly.

MICHAEL.

Do you mean that? With all your heart?

JASON.

With all my heart.

MICHAEL.

Jason, you don't know the risk you would run, but I do, and if anything happened to you while I was away I should never forgive myself—never, though I lived a hundred years.

JASON.

What reason have you to fear that anything will happen? None at all! Then go, and for form's sake—just that and no more—let me wait here until you return.

MICHAEL.

Is that the condition of my going?

MISS ROSEMUND BURY AS

MISS ELLY MALYON AS



JASON.

Yes.

MICHAEL.

Then I won't go.

JASON.

If you don't, you'll break that poor girl's heart, Michael.

MICHAEL.

Tell her I could not.

JASON.

I'll tell her you could, and would not.

MICHAEL.

Will you tell her why I would not?

JASON.

No! [*Leaning over him.*] Michael, she is calling for you—far away at home. It is her last request—her last prayer: "Come to me, my husband, come and forgive me before I die!"

MICHAEL.

[*Rising.*] Let me go and make ready.

JASON.

[*Leading him to room right.*] That's right.

[*MICHAEL goes in, JASON wipes his eyes.*]

I forgive you, Jason! You couldn't help it—'pon my soul you couldn't!

[*GREEBA comes down in great agitation.*]

GREEBA.

You are deceiving us.

JASON.

Hush, Greeba!

GREEBA.

You led me to believe that you were to go away too, yet you have just told Michael you are to remain.

JASON.

I had to—he wouldn't have gone otherwise. He is thinking of the priest—afraid to leave him in the lurch, you know.

GREEBA.

Jason, you are deceiving all of us—the priest, Michael, myself, everybody.

JASON.

Nonsense! Before your steamer is out of sight I shall have escaped.

GREEBA.

How? In what way?

JASON.

Many ways are open to a man with a pair of good eyes that are closed to a blind one.

GREEBA.

Something is going to happen—I know it, I feel it.

JASON.

Tut! What can have put that in your head, Greeba?

GREEBA.

Rather than anything should happen to you as the result of our going away I would stay here for the rest of my life. So would Michael. After all, we are together, we are under the same roof, and we may come to know and forgive and love each other again.

JASON.

Hush! Your hour has come at last, Greeba. Seize it. Don't let it slip.

GREEBA.

[*Firmly.*] You are concealing something. Tell me what it is.

JASON.

Don't speak so loud.

GREEBA.

[*Vehemently.*] I'll shout, I'll scream, I'll put an end to everything, unless——

JASON.

[*Laying hold of her arm.*] You shall not! I've come here to save Michael and give you back to your husband. I've planned that, schemed it, lain awake at night to think of it. And shall you stop it at the last moment? No!

GREEBA.

[*Breaking.*] Then treat me as a woman, not as a child, and tell me—tell me.

JASON.

Very well, I will. Then you'll see that if you stay here another night, there can be no living together under the same roof, no love and no forgiveness.

GREEBA.

[*Almost fainting.*] Go on Jason—I'll be brave.

JASON.

[*In a lone tone, getting close.*] The new crew that has come to take the place of the old one has brought out a serious order.

GREEBA.

About Michael?

JASON.

Yes.

GREEBA.

[*Gasping.*] You mean an order for—for his *execution*?

JASON.

[*Putting his hand over her mouth, whispering.*] Hush! Remember your promise! Be brave. [*Aloud.*] Ah, back already!

[MICHAEL returns, hat and cloak in hand

MICHAEL.

This is more than a brother's love, Jason ; and to think it's you——

JASON.

Yes, it's funny, isn't it ! [*To GREEBA.*] Courage !

MICHAEL.

Nothing else in the world would have taken me away from you to your peril. But now that my poor girl is sick and dying, I *must* go to her.

JASON.

Of course you must. No time to lose either. The housekeeper is here and everything is ready. Give me your cloak and hat. [*Takes them, lays them on chair and signals to GREEBA to bring up his own. She does so. He puts his own cloak and hat on MICHAEL.*] You're to go home in my berth, and nobody will know the difference between us.

MICHAEL.

You think not ?

JASON.

Sure of it. Not to-night any way. You'll find two sailors at the harbour waiting with a boat. Give them something and tell them to take you to your cabin. If you stagger a bit, they'll know what to think of it. [*Laughs.*] As soon as the day breaks I'll go up the cliff to see you off. You might come on deck and wave good-bye to me.

MICHAEL.

I will, and though my eyes are blind, I'll seem to see you.

JASON.

I'll seem to see you, too, sailing away like a sea-bird down the footpath of the sun.

[GREEBA *is breathing audibly*, JASON *signals to her to be quiet.*

MICHAEL.

Jason, I cannot forget that my poor girl made shipwreck of your life also.

JASON.

Not she. She never cared for me. Belonged to you only—always did, always will do.

MICHAEL.

Sometimes I think there must have been a mistake somewhere.

JASON.

Should rather think so.

MICHAEL.

And now that I'm blind I seem to see her near me always.

JASON.

You do?

[GREEBA *makes pleading gestures as if she wished to throw herself in MICHAEL'S arms.*

JASON.

[*Whispers.*] Not yet—not till you're out at sea.

MICHAEL.

Only a dream—a foolish dream !

JASON.

But what if the dream came true, and you opened your eyes some morning, and your sight came back to you, and you saw her by your side?

MICHAEL.

That's impossible. Yet some mysterious fate seems to be hovering over me, and I feel like a child who is stumbling in the dark.

JASON.

[*After opening door and looking out.*] Dark enough to-night, anyway, and if you had your sight already you couldn't see a step before you. So give your hand to this good woman, and whatever happens hereafter, never, never let it go. [*He joins the hands of MICHAEL and GREEBA.*]

MICHAEL.

Does she know my way so well, Jason ?

JASON.

[*Leading them to the door.*] She knows the way for both of you. And now come—good-bye !

MICHAEL.

Good-bye, until we meet again, brother.

JASON.

[*Suddenly very solemn.*] Until we meet—again.

[*The brothers clasp hands and part.* GREEBA holds back a moment, looking at JASON with deep emotion. He puts his arms about her and she kisses him. She is breaking into sobs. He signals to her to be silent. MICHAEL and GREEBA pass out. JASON holds door and calls after them :

My love to everybody at home! A dig in the ribs for Danny, and a hug for Mena and her doll. [*Mimicking child's voice.*] "You cry, I kiss you, you not cry no more!" [*He laughs, a heart-breaking laugh, then closes door and stands back to it, with face full of agony.*] Gone! My God! Gone! [*Shakes himself, goes to bottle, pours out glass, then pauses and puts it down.*] Not yet! [*Opens drawer in table, rummages around.*] Where does he keep them?— Ah! [*Finds paper, envelopes, pen and ink, and sits down at table to write. Writes with difficulty. Spells some of the words. Laughs and sobs alternately.*]

"Dear [*Spells.*] B-r-u-t-h-e-r, whatever you hear, fear not for me. I have [*Spells.*] s-c-a-p-t. So you need not think of coming back. But don't expect to see me [*Spelling.*] a-g-e-n, because I dare not be seen. You are going home to your beautiful England, but poor old Sicily is the only place for me. Greeba, good [*Spells.*] b-u-y. I shall never lose [*Spells.*] h-a-r-t. Michael, she has loved you—you only—all the days

of her life. Good-bye! I am well and [*Spelling.*] h-a-p-e-y. Good-bye. God bless you both!

"N.P. The old priest has escaped [*Spells.*] t-w-o. Good-bye."

[*Puts letter in envelope, addresses it. Sees flowers, lifts them up, puts them to his lips, lays them down again. Then lowers the lamp and blows it out with his nostrils.*]

The dawn!

[*The daylight is seen filtering through the window-blinds. He parts them a little and looks out.*]

All quiet on the sea! There she is! The war-ship—silent as a sleeping child! [*A bell rings in the distance.*] The signal! [*He goes up to bell-rope and pulls. Bell rings overhead. He returns to window.*] All safe! They're getting up steam on the steamer. [*Voices heard singing in distance.*]

They're weighing anchor! [*Siren is blown.*] She's off! She's off! She has gone! [*Goes to table, takes glass, drinks and laughs.*] You're in for it now, Jason! You've cooked your goose, my boy! [*Takes up bottle.*] The last time! The very last! [*Drinks and dashes bottle into grate, laughing and singing and shouting.*] Where are you, Father What's-your-Name?

[*The PRIEST comes out of his bedroom.*]

PRIEST.

God bless me, who's that?

JASON.

Why, your bondman—your bondman!

PRIEST.

[*Coming down.*] Has he gone?

JASON.

Of course he has gone. They've both gone.

PRIEST.

Both?

JASON.

You didn't see through it, old mole?

PRIEST.

See through what?

JASON.

That she was his wife.

PRIEST.

Who——?

JASON.

Your housekeeper as you called her.

PRIEST.

God bless my soul! When are they coming back?

JASON.

They're never coming back. [*Showing letter.*] I'm taking care of that.

PRIEST.

What does it all mean?

JASON.

It means that the new crew are bringing out an

order for the President's execution, and he has slipped out of their hands.

PRIEST.

God save us! His execution! And do you mean—no, you cannot mean that you intend to die instead . .

JASON.

Why not? I've had my little joke, I must pay the price of it.

PRIEST.

[*Passionately.*] I'll not stand by and see it done.

JASON.

You must.

PRIEST.

I will not.

JASON.

[*His arm about PRIEST's shoulder.*] Old friend, I'm not saving my brother—I'm saving myself.

PRIEST.

Yourself?

JASON.

Don't you see? Since I left the Mines I've been drinking myself to death. Isn't it better to die in bringing two sundered hearts together than to be found dead in a ditch some day?

PRIEST.

God pity you! God help you! God bless you!

JASON.

Ay, pray to your God! But I'll not pray to Him. He doesn't make his world for poor wretches like me.

PRIEST.

Heaven will save you as it has saved me, my son.

JASON.

Never!

PRIEST.

Your brother is gone—they cannot bring him back now. The Governor is a tyrant, but I don't care for consequences. I'll tell everything. You shall live.

JASON.

Useless! Impossible!

PRIEST.

Nothing is impossible to God, my son. "No matter how low a man has fallen, as long as his soul is alive, there's salvation for him still." I'll write. You shall be saved.

JASON.

Too late! They're here! Look!

[*Laying hold of PRIEST by the wrist, he drags him to the window and pulls blind. The sunlight flashes in their faces. A company of BLUEJACKETS are seen marching past. JASON snatches up and puts on MICHAEL'S cloak and hat. A NAVAL OFFICER and BLUEJACKETS with muskets come in.*]

OFFICER.

Father Ferrati? [PRIEST bows.] This is your prisoner, I presume?

[PRIEST hesitates. JASON tugs at his arm.
PRIEST bows again. JASON crosses; OFFICER
addresses him, holding a paper.

OFFICER.

I am sorry to be the bearer of a serious warrant, sir.

JASON.

You are the Captain of the new crew?

OFFICER.

Yes. It is my painful duty to tell you——

JASON.

I know . . . When is it to be, Captain?

OFFICER.

To-day, this morning, immediately.

[PRIEST utters a cry. JASON holds up his hand.

JASON.

I'm ready. But our friends of the old crew have just sailed, you know, and I promised to wave good-bye to them from the cliff. May I?

OFFICER.

Certainly!

[JASON picks up flowers from table and during
following scene fixes them in his hat.

JASON.

[*To PRIEST.*] Good-bye, old friend! [*Whispering.*] Don't speak! [*Aloud.*] You'll send a line to my people at home. [*Whispering and giving letter.*] Here it is; post it by the first mail. [*Aloud.*] Say I'm tired of this dreary place and not sorry to leave it. [*Whispering.*] Listen! I love my brother's wife! Love is the best thing we get for being in the world, but some of us miss it, and then what is there left to live for? [*Aloud.*] Say I went off cheerful and they're not to trouble about me. [*Whispering.*] Remember my mother: think of what I tried to do before. A light from heaven shines on my path now. Let me walk by it ere the world dims it. [*Aloud.*] Say I've been beating to windward all my life, but I'm fetching the harbour all right at last. Good-bye, old friend! God bless you! God bless everybody!

[*He puts on his hat and goes out with a light step, humming his students' chorus. The BLUEJACKETS follow him. At the next moment two men are seen outside looking after JASON. They are the OLD GOVERNOR and DOCTOR BONI. They enter, the CAPTAIN returning with them.*]

DOCTOR.

[*Entering.*] That was not Michael Sunlocks. It was the man Jason.

GOVERNOR.

[*To PRIEST.*] What does this mean?

[*The PRIEST trembles and is silent.*]

DOCTOR.

Some trick, sir, some treachery.

GOVERNOR.

Speak, man. Am I to wring the truth out of your throat? What does it mean?

PRIEST.

[*Passionately.*] It means that I am a miserable coward, and you are a merciless tyrant! [GOVERNOR *falls back as if smitten on the face.*] It means that while you have been hurrying here to see with your evil eyes your vengeance executed on your enemy, another has come before you to lay down his life for his friend! It means that your victim has gone—I have let him go—and the one who has taken his place is your own child's child, your outcast daughter's outcast son, and when he dies it will be your hand that has killed him, and then your guilty soul will be damned and his will be washed in the blood of the Lamb! [*Going across and throwing open the door.*] Away with you! Go back to the place of your power. There is no one now to take it from you. But know the Lord liveth, and all your evil schemes have come to nought. Away! Take your wicked feet away, for this is God's house and holy ground!

[*The GOVERNOR seems to shrivel up as the PRIEST'S lash falls over him. He turns to the OFFICER.*

GOVERNOR.

[*To OFFICER.*] The warrant.

[*OFFICER gives warrant to GOVERNOR, who*

tears it up with trembling fingers and goes out like a whipped dog, followed by DOCTOR BONI.

OFFICER.

[*To BLUEJACKETS.*] Back to the ship!

BLUEJACKETS *go off*. SCENE CHANGES *instantly to the*

TABLEAU.

A rocky sea-coast with harbour lying far below. Sun rising above the sea-line. A radiant morning. A man-of-war at anchor in the bay, and, farther out, between the two smooth mirrors of sea and sky a steamer sailing away.

A faint sound of music. "Home, Sweet Home" is being played on a cornet.

On the highest point of the headland JASON is standing with his face to the departing steamer. He waves his hand to it—once, twice, thrice. Then his hand drops, and the flowers in it fall at his feet.

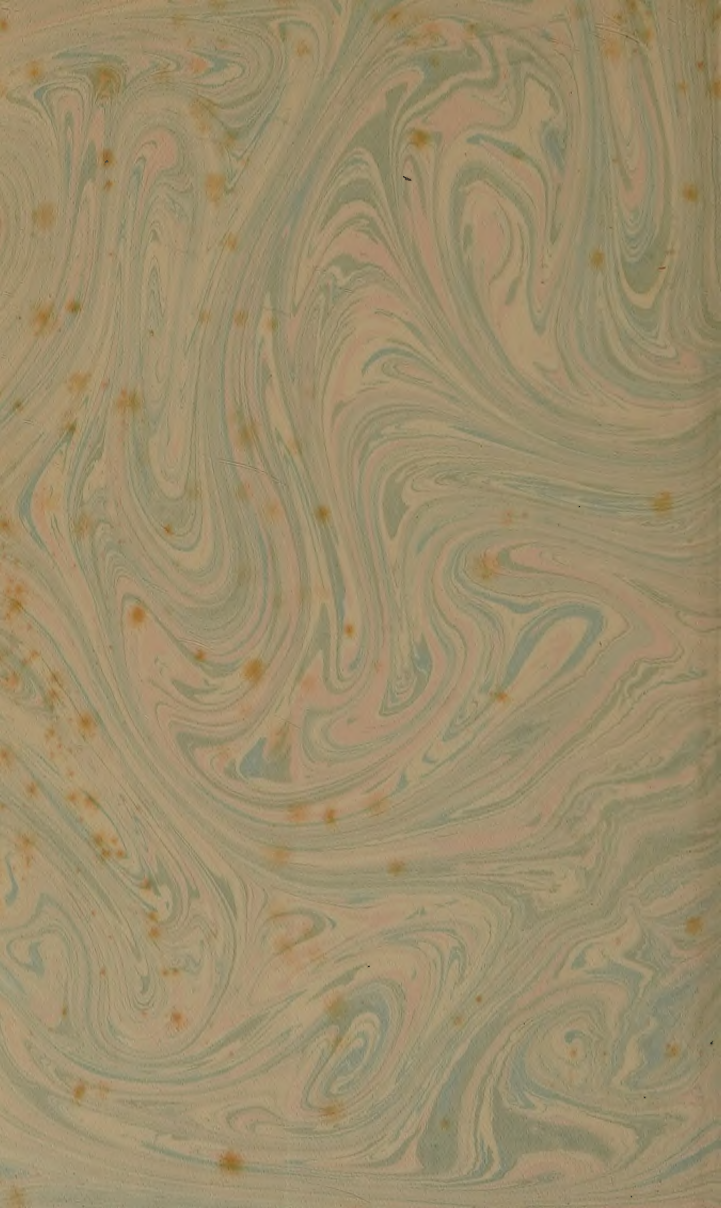
The music becomes fainter and fainter until it dies away. There is only the boom of the waves against the rocks below, the cry of the sea-gulls overhead, and the lonely figure on the headland as the CURTAIN slowly descends.

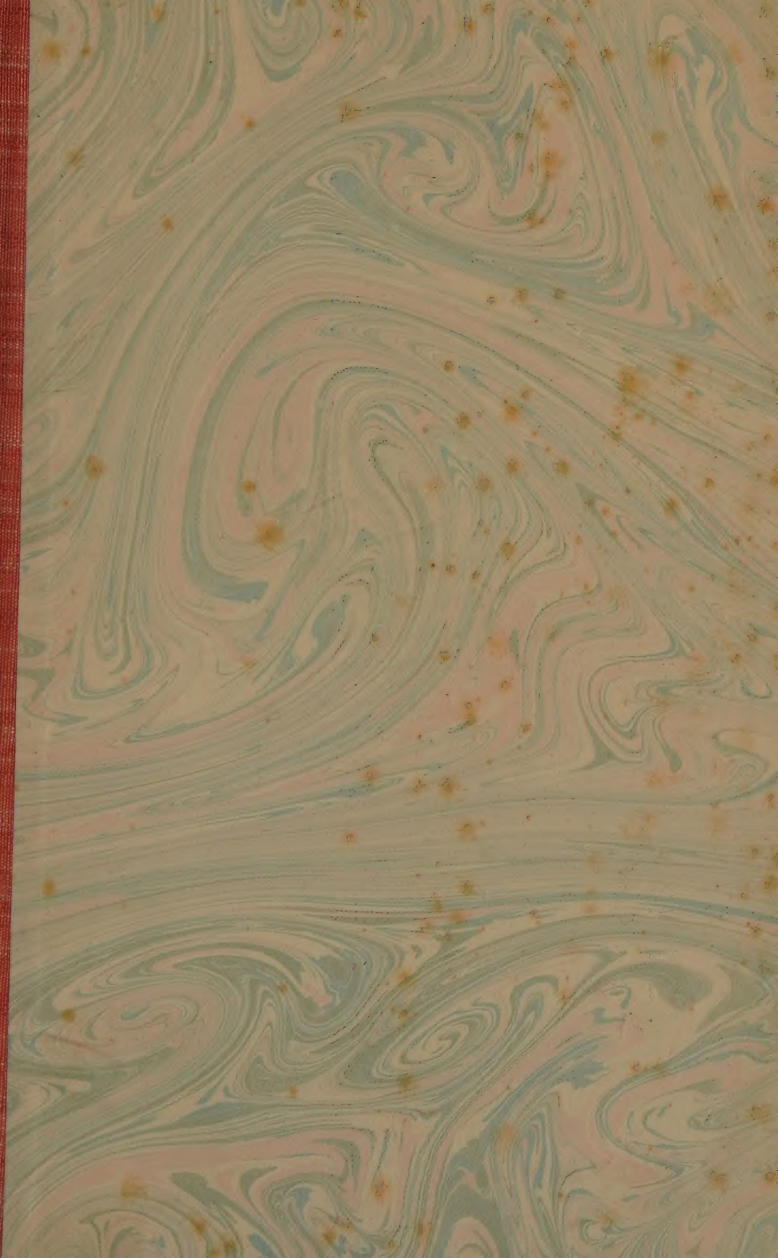
THE END.

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ACT IV.
GREEBA AND MICHAEL LEAVE FOR HOME.







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